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Cover picture: An untitled oil painting on wood (1985) by Francesco Clemente. It is on show at the Anthony d'Offy Gallery, 9 and 23 Dering Street, New Bond Street, London W1, until September 30.

A programme for the future?

Noel Annan

The Peacock Report
240pp. HMSO. £10.80.
0 10 1982402
MICHAEL LEPPMAN
The Last Days of the Beeb
299pp. Allen and Unwin. £12.95.
004 7910437
COLIN MCCABE and OLIVIA STEWART
(Editors)
The BBC and Public Service Broadcasting
116pp. Manchester University Press. £23.50
(paperback, £6.50).
07190 19648

In every country in the world, government to some degree controls broadcasting. Broadcasting depends on radio frequencies and frequencies are limited. This means that there have to be international rules governing the use of the radio spectrum. So when a country is allocated a band of frequencies its government will in turn allocate them to different kinds of services: telegraphy, telephones, television and radio and so on: and it will regulate the strength of transmissions to prevent interference with other stations. However broadcasting is organized, governments control the waves and negotiate with other governments. There similarities end. In the United States, federal control is minimal after the broadcasters have been given the wavelengths. In totalitarian countries governments impose editorial restrictions and dictate how many hours each type of programme should be allowed.

The British evolved their broadcasting system through a series of committees of inquiry. There have been six major inquiries, and the first two in the 1920s in effect established the way broadcasting was to be regulated. Of course the State must in the last resort control "such a potential power over public opinion and the life of the nation", as the Sykes Committee put it in 1923. What is more, added the Crawford Committee three years later, the frequencies should be used in the public interest and not for the benefit of powerful interest groups. Broadcasting was a public service, and programmes should be able to be heard by the mass of citizens and not only in the big cities. No one had the right to broadcast, and no interest group, even churches or teachers, had the right to dictate the content of religious or educational programmes.

But at the same time the Sykes and Crawford

Committees declared, in true Whig style, that there should be a check on the power of the State. Although the State should control broadcasting, the government should not. The device that was used to prevent government interference in day-to-day broadcasting – and no less to prevent Parliament from dictating that this or that topic was inadmissible – was the Broadcasting Authority. This body had to ensure that the broadcasters operated in the public interest and were responsive to public opinion; it also had the duty to defend the broadcasters from pressures, whether party political or otherwise. The broadcasters should be responsible to the Authority, not to Parliament, nor to the government; and the government's powers of direct interference were minutely defined. It was on these lines before the war that the BBC developed its two radio services. The Corporation's Governors acted as the authority. The Director-General was responsible to them. As a public service it was financed by a licence fee so that its accounts were not subject to direct Parliamentary scrutiny and hence its operations could not be challenged (though they could be discussed) in Parliament.

And yet the most important development in British broadcasting took place without the advice of any committee. Wisely enough, the first Conservative post-war government realized that if they had asked a committee to examine whether commercial broadcasting should be permitted, the committee would have split down the middle. What alarmed them more was that the Conservative Party too would have been split – for a sizeable minority led by the present Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham, were against it, fearing a repetition here of American network output. That this did not occur was something of a triumph for British governmental sagacity. The solution was to make the commercial companies in television (and later in radio) also subject to an authority (the Independent Broadcasting Authority, as it later became). The legislation setting up the Authority specified that commercial broadcasting was not to be run solely for profit but should include a public service with a range of programmes and an impartial news service. Each commercial company was to serve a region providing programmes of local interest; the most suitable programmes were to be networked.

Most of the programmes on the network came from the five biggest companies, two in northern England, one in the Midlands and

two in London. The public, guzzling independent television's quiz shows, sitcoms and personality programmes, deserted the BBC in shorts until the BBC's share of the audience was hardly more than a third. But in the late 1950s the BBC began to recover. It started producing programmes of such originality that the public, by now tiring of pop, partially returned. By this time some eyebrows were being raised. The Canadian newspaper impresario, and the virtual owner of Scottish Television, Roy Thomson, said with engaging frankness that he had been given a licence to print money, and the government set up another committee to advise what should be done with a third television channel that had become available.

The Pilkington Committee's report changed the face of commercial television. Their proposal to alter the organization and finance of ITV was indeed turned down by the government, but the powers of the IBA were increased. They now began to guide the balance and content of the commercial channel, telling the companies to produce more serious programmes and more for children. The third channel was given to the BBC. That meant they had the chance to rent ITV's audiences by aggressive scheduling. The BBC also realized that it had become identified with the Establishment. When Hugh Greene became Director-General of the BBC, Cabinet ministers could no longer expect interviewers to touch their forelock; the satire shows took the skin off the backs of the prominent; and, by following the anti-authoritarian slant of ITV's *World in Action*, BBC current affairs programmes, too, explored national evils and calamities. So discomfiting did the Labour Government find these developments that in 1970 the Prime Minister translated Charles Hill, chairman of the IBA, to the BBC as if to warn the BBC that a politician would now preside over their affairs. It was also announced that another committee to review broadcasting would be set up. The Conservative victory in the election of that year meant that the committee was not set up until 1974. By then the issue was no longer the quality of programmes, but the control of broadcasting. People had begun to be alarmed by violence and sex on television and accusations of political bias whizzed through the air from Westminster to the Authorities. Broadcasting was said to be too important to be left to the broadcasters. There was a demand to set up a Broadcasting Commission that could order the BBC Gov-

ernors and IBA to alter schedules, allocate resources and investigate complaints, and it was proposed that the members of this commission and of the broadcasting organizations were to be nominated by bodies such as the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress, the work force and local government.

The Annan Committee rejected these proposals. They would have politicized broadcasting. The Committee preferred to leave accountability where it was – with the broadcasting Authorities – and they refused to usurp the powers of the Home Secretary. But to meet the demand for greater diversity they advocated breaking the monopoly of the BBC and IBA and multiplying the number of Authorities. They also proposed that there should be an Open Broadcasting Authority for Channel Four, which was envisaged as a channel partly for independent producers; a Local Broadcasting Authority for radio, community television and cable; a Complaints Commission; and a Public Enquiry Board which would hold public hearings on the performance of the broadcasters every seven years.

By the time legislation had to be introduced a Conservative government was again in power and decided that these proposals were too inflationary. But they did not establish an ITV 2. They set up Channel Four on the lines the Committee had suggested. They sponsored a Complaints Commission and set up an Authority for cable. The Annan Committee had deliberated during a time of financial crisis, of runaway inflation and rescue by the International Monetary Fund; and as a result had not been bullish about the likelihood that satellite broadcasting would soon begin or that cable would find many subscribers. But less than a decade later, numbers of entrepreneurs began to press for action.

Moreover, another issue had surfaced. The television licence fee had always been a nagging issue but it had now become a nasty vote-loser for Government. The lump-sum payment for the licence fee was hated by the poor. Why did it have to go up so often and so steeply? The Conservative government was irritated. At a time when they were trying to contain public expenditure and reduce inflation they were told by the BBC that the licence fee must rise to match the rise in broadcasting costs, which was far higher than the current rate of inflation. To Margaret Thatcher and her advisers, it seemed that the BBC had itself created the problem by continuing to expand its services even though

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the automatic increase in revenue produced by the public buying colour television sets was declining. By now, most people had them.

Mesmerized costs continued to rise. The BBC's wage costs were affected by its need to compete with ITV, and ITV's wage costs were considerable. The ITV galleon, laden with gold from the mines of advertising, had been boarded by pirates of the Association of Cinematography, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT). It was the members of ACTT who imposed over-manning and restrictive practices and indulged in skulduggery and blackmail on a scale that made the print unions, such as the National Graphical Association and Sogit in Fleet Street, look like small-time bandits. Was there not a neat solution to hand? If the BBC took advertising, the licence fee could be kept level and the excess revenue to ITV would be reduced. No longer would the ITV companies be threatened with walking the plank, and the pirates would be battered down beneath hatches.

The Peacock Committee, set up in 1985, differed from its predecessors. It was not a "balanced" committee representing widely divergent interests. All its members could be expected to some degree to support a free market economy. The Prime Minister was no usual citizen for picking it, as she had packed the BBC Governors. But Professor Peacock could claim that his committee was different from previous committees. It was to consider a specific problem. If you want a particular option to be examined there is no point in appointing members who would start by closing their minds to the option. Its terms of reference reminded me of those given by a Labour government to the Public Schools Commission.

Professor Peacock and his colleagues should be praised for the way in which they weighed the arguments, constructed economic models and came down against the introduction of advertising on the BBC. To the opponents of advertising the arguments against it were self-evident. They took their stand on the principle that no outlet should compete with any other for the same source of revenue. But self-evident arguments are often a substitute for thought. The chapters dealing with the issue bear the stamp of Peacock's own authority and should provoke lively discussion on the Right. Having reached this conclusion the Committee's members could have folded their tents and stolen quietly away. Not surprisingly, having done so much hard work, they declined to be so pusillanimous and wrote a scenario on the impending revolution in broadcasting. This, too, deserves praise. It is bold, imaginative and tries to bring home to those mortally imprisoned by the success of the BBC and ITV how different broadcasting will look by the end of the century.

Each broadcasting committee is told tales of the revolution in technology and each has to judge how likely it is that such changes are to occur in the immediate future and the lifetime of their Report. Peacock thinks these changes are going to come about very soon. Most people will soon have a dish on their roof capable of receiving dozens of services. Many programmes, which their videos will be able to record, will be beamed by satellite or transmitted by cable and will be financed by advertising. People will stick into their set credit cards which will unscramble the signal, or they will subscribe to a particular service.

On no account should the BBC's plea be admitted that the licence fee should rise in line with the rise in broadcasting costs. But the Committee goes far further. The BBC must recognize that in the new age of multiple channels and choice the public is going to be unwilling to pay a licence fee at all to an organization whose products they will watch only occasionally to see. According to Peacock, public service broadcasting provides programmes which promote knowledge, culture, criticism and experiment. *EastEnders* or *Dallas* are not part of public service broadcasting. It would therefore be justifiable to set up a Public Service Broadcasting Council to secure funding from taxation for Radio 3 and Radio 4, local and regional radio and for television programmes which satisfied their criteria.

Just as the Stock Exchange and merchant banks are now geared for the Big Bang, so in the next few years broadcasting should be transformed. The "comfortable monopoly"

should be brought to an end and all television outlets exposed to competition. As audiences fragment, the ITV companies will suffer a loss of revenue and the ACTT will be forced to mend their ways or face their Wapping. The BBC should be financed by subscription, just as public service broadcasting is funded in the United States. The regulatory Authorities will be abolished. After all, if satellites can transmit any programme, however violent or biased, why should regulations be imposed on BBC or ITV? In line with the free market philosophy all restrictions should be removed from national communications companies, from pay per channel or per programme schemes, from European cable companies and from franchises of ITV and satellite. The franchises should go to the highest bidder. Accordingly, that old nag, the Telecommunications Authority, is once more walking round the paddock hoping to be brought under starter's orders. Finally, in order to reduce costs, the BBC and ITV in the next ten years should cut their pro-

The Committee is not concerned with standards. "Let the market find its own level" is their advice. If people want a diet of quiz shows and cops-and-robbers movies, a channel will exist to satisfy them, just as it will for those who want something a little more demanding. That is not the experience of British commercial television. The commercial network produced numbers of excellent programmes and series and the very advertisements, made by some of the best talents in broadcasting, reflected the quality of ITV. After the early days it showed that commercial television did not have to copy the American network. But this would not have been so had ITV not been a system regulated by the Authority. Is the Committee somewhat optimistic in assuming that in the unregulated Holy Land they view from their Pisgah such standards will prevail?

The Committee also sounds optimistic on another matter. People were asked whether they would take out a subscription to a truncated BBC service. Forty-five per cent replied



Norman Rockwell's "Grandpa Listening in on the Wireless", oil on canvas, a cover illustration for the Literary Digest in 1920. It is reproduced here from Norman Rockwell: A definitive catalogue (1,200pp. University Press of New England, £150, 09613273 1), which will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

duction teams and take 40 per cent of their output from independent producers, and the BBC should sell off Radio 1 and Radio 2 and charge £10 for car radios.

Peacock has done what no other committee on broadcasting had ever done. He has redrawn the map and given plenty of reasons why the era of the Authorities, and indeed of the BBC itself as we know it, is at an end. He concludes by saying that he wants to take the mystique out of broadcasting so that "it becomes no more special than publishing became once the world became used to living with the printing press". It is for that reason that the Committee recommends that broadcasting should be subject to the Obscene Publications Act, 1959, and all forms of censorship by Authorities should disappear. I agree that at times the prudish still seem to reign. There is a convention in television drama whereby couples about to make love get into bed wearing their pants or knickers. But did the Peacock Committee read Bernard Williams's 1979 Report on *Obscenity and Film Censorship*, which distinguished sharply between the degree of offence given by the printed word and that from visual images beamed into the home? Did they take note of the way the 1959 act has operated? If all was left to the 1959 Act, I suspect the outcry would be such that the Act would be at once amended. It would become more draconian, the police would rub their hands, and the courts would interpret it with a vengeance.

That they were willing to pay £1.20 a week. The Committee thought that so high a response to so novel an idea was encouraging and concluded that over 75 per cent of present viewers of BBC programmes would sign up. This conclusion is astonishing. Why should all but a minority pay for a particular service when other channels paid for by advertisements would be "free"? Why after a few years should Britain be any different from the United States, where public service broadcasting barely keeps its head above water and shows large numbers of programmes made by the BBC? Who would make those programmes if the BBC were cut down to size? It is a pity that only one member of the Committee visited Japan. The Japanese modelled their broadcasting after the war on the British example and the NHK faces many of the same problems (such as the licence fee) as the BBC. It would be interesting to know how that country, the leader in television technology, and as fine an example of aggressive capitalism as Professor Peacock could want, is preparing to meet the future.

The Committee's redefinition of public service broadcasting reminds one of G. M. Trevelyan's description of social history: "The history of a people with the politics left out". They define public service broadcasting as broadcasting with entertainment left out. Both BBC and ITV claim to give a public service and not give in to the day's popular entertainment. Has the Committee forgotten

Carol Gibbons and the Savoy Orpheans or the pre-ITMA Tommy Handley? If the BBC was financed by subscription topped up by a subsidy to provide opera and other cultural delicacies, would it be permitted to include comedies, pop shows, and American imported products? Well may the Committee say that "there would be no reason why if they wanted to do so, the BBC should not finance some of its operations by advertising or the ITV sell some of their programmes by subscription". But surely this is where the argument began. Reduced to penury after a few years of living on an indexed licence fee and selling off a few of its frequencies (which are not its own to sell), the BBC will not expire without a struggle. It is forced to look for another source of income will take advertising. What is more, the resourcefulness of the BBC is such that it probably could take advertising without endangering the quality of the whole product. Of course Peacock may be right in saying that if the BBC took advertising the smaller television companies might go under and newspapers would suffer: as a wise economist he hedges his conclusions with reservations. But if you believe that a free market economy brings benefits to all and therefore the regulating machinery of the government, Governors and IBA is obsolete, why blench at recommending a free-for-all in advertising?

Does the country still want or need a BBC? Commenting on Peacock, *The Economist* concluded that some public service broadcasting would continue to need public subsidy but it might not need the BBC. Individual programmes and their makers should get the subsidy, not the Corporation. Hostility to the Corporation has been growing over the years. That is not just the legacy of Hugh Greene. A new generation of producers, products of the revolution of the 1960s, prided themselves on their independence. They evaded the guidelines and procedures that had been set up as lightning-conductors. Their programmes on events in Ulster provoked row after row. So self-righteous were the broadcasters in their claim to be independent of government, state and nation that at the time of the Falklands engagement some thought it their duty to interview the newly bereaved widows of that war to ask them if they thought it worth while, even while the fighting was still going on. When complaints multiplied about violent and unsuitable programmes, the press and the broadcasters retaliated by complaining about interference and censorship by the Authorities subservient to an authoritarian government.

Nine years ago the perennial discontent with the BBC elicited an excellent book by a fine sociologist, Tom Burns, who examined its structure and practices. This time it has elicited a book by a columnist, Michael Leapman, a prince among gossips. He has rung up the living and dug out the retired. Like the Peacock Committee he has come to the conclusion that the BBC will survive only if it is split up, if fewer of its programmes are produced in-house and if the Governors are removed. Pick up this book and, if you have anything to do with the media, you will not put it down. It's all about who scuppered whom: most enjoyable. Still, you may wonder whether the story of the row when Esther Rantzen married Desmond Wilcox and by continuing to work on *That's Life* broke a BBC convention, or of the move of Michael Grade from Hollywood to Television Centre, has anything to do with the future of the BBC.

You may also wonder how much of this book is true. Unless one is within the BBC itself it is almost impossible to guess. It reads as if it was written to discredit Alastair Milne. While others tell their story, he is never given the chance to tell his. I do not doubt that those interviewed said what Leapman says they did, nor even that the events took place as set down. But beneath the air of verisimilitude the glosses that the author puts on events, and on the only one of which I have knowledge, his gloss is wrong.

Moreover, Leapman has a curious conception of politics. He considers itself evident that the *Real Lives* controversy (when the BBC filmed an IRA and a Protestant hardliner, each in the bosom of his family, making his case for violence) would never have occurred had not the government already announced the Peacock Inquiry. To him it is self-evident that

the Governors, terrified of the consequences, wanted to show how ready they were to know. The word "political" is not used by commentators with much discrimination. It is legitimate for the Government to demand that television shall never be used to excite sympathy for terrorists or enable them to make propaganda. It is illegitimate for the government or any political party to pressurize the Governors to ban particular programmes (unless in a national emergency) as a maladroit Home Secretary did in the *Real Lives* controversy. The BBC has to judge whether to resist the pressure or to acknowledge that the objectors have a point and modify the programme. In the *Real Lives* controversy the Governors gave way too readily.

The BBC and Public Service Broadcasting is an interesting collection of seminar offerings edited by Colin McCabe and Olivia Stewart in the run up to Peacock. McCabe is a utopian. He wants to see minority audiences developing and defining themselves and then broadcasting their definitions back to the wider community. There would be no separate category of broadcasters. "We would become a nation of independent producers." But there is no doubt that William Malley or David Elstein want. For Malley no institution in a capitalist society can function as a free agent. The BBC, ethnocentric, Oxbridge-dominated, phallicentric and reactionary, lives a lie by pretending to be free when the licence fee makes it subservient to Government; and Elstein adds that the prattle about the fine quality of British broadcasting is just another bourgeois put-on.

No doubt the number of times the Peacock Committee were told that British broadcasting was the best in the world induced in them the state of mind of the illiterate Athenian who asked Aristides to write his own name on the sherd of ostracism because he was so fired of hearing Aristides called the Just. But the sublime indifference to the quality of programmes displayed by Elstein and Malley (who would replace the present public service by "local culture centres of communication") is breathtaking. It takes an American, Brenda Maddox, to declare that it is the system of regulation that makes British broadcasting so good. Sure, the number of channels and services will increase as Peacock forecasts. But why deregulate? Let

satellite and cable transmission go free: no more than Peacock dines Ms Maddox car for the Cable Authority or the Satellite Broadcasting Board. She believes that most people will go on viewing BBC and ITV partly by force of habit and partly because the quality of the product is so high. But it will not remain high if regulation goes. Let the two systems coexist as they do in Japan. Take price in not taking advertising. Otherwise the BBC will end up like an American station in which the station manager's underwear is auctioned on screen to pull in more subscriptions.

All the critics sympathetic to the BBC agree that it has got to make more of an effort to retain the confidence of the State and the public. Yet if it makes a robust response to criticism, it is accused of arrogance; if it accepts that there are failings, it is accused of supine mismanagement. In the most spirited of the contributions Janet Morgan, the special adviser to the Director-General, thinks the BBC has three ways of disarming its critics. It can appear to be decent and ready to respond to Whitehall fashions, for example, financial management initiatives, and to public pressures, for example, minority programmes. That is not difficult because the BBC is in fact full of decent and sensible people. The second way is in rely on the emergence of charismatic figures such as Huw Wheldon and Grace Wyndham Goldie. Unfortunately such people don't emerge all that often. The third way of convincing people that the BBC gives value for money is to use quasi-scientific methods of persuasion such as the measurement of audience ratings. None of these is enough, and she thinks the BBC must reflect on its marriage to the politicians and the public. A marriage between two people who are from time to time unfaithful often works because both realize that any alternative would be worse. But there comes a time when such a relationship seems dishonest and then it is that both have got to consider what each wants from the other.

Anthony Smith agrees. In my opinion he was the most influential propagator of Channel Four (despite David Elstein's claim to have been its begetter as early as 1972), and his is the leading contribution to the seminar. He thinks that there have been three BBC eras. In the first the BBC had its own troupe of actors,

eleven house orchestras, even its own hymnbook. In the second era it became impossible for it to do everything in-house - it hired pup groups rather than employing its own group. The third era began in the 1970s, when the BBC recognized that its task was not only to find new talent but, like Channel Four, to discover the meanings and messages current in society and turn them into programmes. Smith has some interesting things to say on the way this nuance in programming could develop. The moral he draws is that the BBC should collaborate with other broadcasters and media instead of trying to incorporate and dominate them; and therefore that it must reduce its commitments instead of adding to them as it has continued to do in recent years.

In whatever way the government responds to Peacock, no one can doubt that the BBC will never again be able to name a licence fee and expect the government to agree to it. But the problem the BBC faces is not only financial or even organizational - although it still refuses to reduce its bureaucracy. Its problem is to re-establish itself as a national Church of culture. That means educating its staff in their role. Lennam thinks that Wheldon was mouthing an anachronism when he said to a colleague, "You must understand that there is something called the BBC which is more important than you are". But being employed by the BBC should mean that you accept obligations that do not reflect other broadcasters - at any rate to the same degree. As a national institution the BBC has a particular duty to report dispassionately on affairs of state and it owes duties to the state - which is quite different from owing duties to the government. At present it does not fulfil this duty at all that well. It does not fulfil it well because top management has not called the staff together and spelt out to them the BBC's national role. For unless it recognizes that role it has no justification for the special treatment it receives through the licence fee. If that were done Government might be less tempted to follow the Peacock Committee's main recommendations of first running down and then - to change from a horological to a legal metaphor - winding up the affairs of an institution which with all its faults is admired throughout the world.

Wanting and getting

John Turner

HUGO YOUNG and ANNE SLOMAN
The Thatcher Phenomenon
144pp. Penguin. Paperback, £3.95.
0563204737

Margaret Thatcher once observed, according to one of Hugo Young and Anne Sloman's contributors, that "when she was fifteen she realized there was nothing she couldn't get out of life and her only problem was to decide what it was she wanted". This is a common experience. In every walk of life, men and women of modest capacity have shown that it is possible to rise to the top of any institution if you want it badly enough. Squadrions of appalling archbishops, dreadful Poets Laureate, unscholarly Regius Professors, philistine and uncommunicative headmasters, bankrupt company chairmen and disorganized managing directors testify to the point. How much damage is done to others depends on which pinnacle you choose to scale. Margaret Roberts, "a good second-class chemist" as an undergraduate, decided she wanted to run the country.

The story so far has some parallels with Winston Churchill, who perhaps lacked her academic ability but made up for it in breadth of vision, and Lloyd George, who decided at the same age, and with rather more justification, that he was a genius. (He was up a tree at the time; the *locus in quo* of Miss Roberts's revelation is not disclosed.) In all three cases the problem is to explain how they overcame obstacles to reach their chosen goal. In each case the best answer is to name a predecessor. Asquith, Neville Chamberlain and Heath. Asquith had led a government (including Lloyd George) which had not won the war. Chamberlain led a government (including

Churchill) which kept making expensive mistakes. Heath led a party (including Thatcher) which lost too many elections. When they stumbled, someone was there to elbow them aside.

The contributors to *The Thatcher Phenomenon* are agreed that she became leader because only she wanted the leadership enough, and only she was prepared to challenge Heath. David Howell, the former Secretary of State for Energy, concedes that she expressed something hitherto suppressed in the Tory Party: an impatience with compromise and concession to labour, and with the growth of the public sector. The Conservative Party, having acquired her in a fit of absent mindedness, came to enjoy winning elections; and the party activists and large sections of the public fell head over heels for her policies and her personality.

One of the most remarkable features of this book is that almost everyone interviewed, from Michael Meacher to Sir Keith Joseph, agrees about what constitutes those policies and that personality. Thatcher is a politician

who does not look back and only looks forward a short distance. Her policies emerge from her personality, and though she has intellectual roots in Joseph, Sir Alfred Sherman and the Institute of Economic Affairs, she has made no contribution to that body of thought. She has embraced monetarism and chauvinism because they are the only forms of public policy which her background and temperament enable her to understand. This essential lack of intellectuality, combined with a formidable command of detail, a talent for simplification and a passion for argument have brought her success in a party which has hitherto been led either by clever and idle men like Disraeli and Balfour, by clever and industrious men like Peel and Chamberlain, or occasionally even by idle and stupid men. Now it is led by a latter-day Harriet Martineau, packing a sabbok. After reading this excellent work of political journalism, onlookers should be concerned, but not surprised, that this leadership has lasted so long, and that it might even last long enough for her policies to run to their inevitable conclusion.

FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS of September 12, 1936, carried a review of Stevie Smith's novel on *Yellow Paper*, from which the following extracts are taken:

The publishers did well to bring out this book without a title. It is a curious, amusing, provocative and very serious piece of work, but impossible to classify - an autobiography perhaps, but of the mind more than of a physical existence, and an autobiography with Shandyesque digressions. It is dangerous to make any such comparison, nevertheless

Sterne is the writer who springs to mind in the midst of Miss Stevie Smith's romblings... The heroine of this "novel" is a young woman whose working hours appear to be spent (for nothing about her is very definite) as the secretary of a magazine-publishing magazine. In her private life she is gay; lives inconspicuously in a suburb with an aunt; has many friends whom she constantly visits; and a lover to whom she cannot tie herself down in marriage because she lacks this same "visiting" temperament, which in her writing makes her dash wildly from one subject to another.



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Not untrue and not unkind

Blake Morrison

KINGSLEY AMIS
The Old Devils
294pp. Hutchinson. £9.95.
009 1637902

"Wales is a subject that can't be talked about", says a character in *The Old Devils*. "Unless you're making a collection of dislocation and self-deception and sentimental bullshit. That's all you ever hear." Such, we may reasonably infer, is the view of Kingsley Amis, who once lived in Wales, who over the years has shown more than a passing interest in that country and whose journalism includes one article about attending the 1954 Eisteddfod and another about judging the Swansen heat of the 1956 Mazda Queen of Light beauty competition in the Casino Ballroom. Mumbles. But his only previous novel with a Welsh setting was *That Uncertain Feeling* (1955), about a young librarian who gets in with the Anglicized upper-middle classes of Aberdare before reverting, in an implausible finale, to his coal-mining roots. In *The Old Devils*, his sixteenth novel, Amis returns to South Wales after a thirty-year gap, or rather has the successful London-based writer and broadcaster Alun Weaver, CBE, do so with his wife Rhianon. This timecoming sets Alun working on a novel, *Coming Home*, destined to be full of dishonesty, self-deception, etc. It also puts the Weavers back in touch with some old friends and drinking cronies, five couples pre-eminently: Peter and Muriel, Charlie and Sophie, Malcolm and Gwen, Garth and Angharad, Percy and Dorothy. The action spans only a few months but the lives of these people are transformed to a greater or lesser (and in one case terminal) degree.

In most respects Amis's two Welsh novels could hardly be more different. The Aberdare crowd was a youthful one, and the only squalor in that earlier novel – shocking to some reviewers of the time – was to be found in the Lewis home, the nappies, ironing, half-eaten apples and toys scattered over the floor. The Weavers and friends, on the other hand, are in their sixties and have begun to experience the squallor of age and decrepitude – false teeth, bowel problems, obesity, mysterious aches and pains. Lewis liked his drink of an evening; the Weavers and friends drink more or less permanently, from mid-morning until midnight, in prodigious quantities ("By a step of doubtful

legitimacy the men thinned their glasses of the heavy liqueur with Scotch") and with an ensuing obstreperousness sufficient to get them expelled from one pub and hanged even from their own local. *That Uncertain Feeling* had helioid it the buoyant irreverence of *Lucky Jim*, which incidentally reserved for its two most detestable characters the surname "Weleh". *The Old Devils* comes from the novelist who wrote *Ending Up*, with its geriatric grand guignol.

Yet there are resemblances, too. Like John Lewis and the eponymous hero of Amis's 1967 poem-sequence "The Evans Country", Alun Weaver is sexually attracted to and sexually active with women, and this sets him off from the jaded, misogynistic heroes of recent Amis novels like *Jake's Thing* and *Stanley and the Women*. Indeed Weaver's philandering supplies some of the key threads in the novel's narrative entanglements, though the lines are a good deal more crossed than they ever were for Lewis: Alun sleeps with Sophie, whose husband Charlie pretends not to know, and also with Gwen, whose husband Malcolm is too slow to guess, but who himself once loved Rhianon, who was far more attracted to Peter, who got her pregnant and paid for an abortion, meanwhile abandoning her for Angharad, who subsequently married Garth, leaving Peter to marry Muriel instead. Since the five couples drink together – or, rather, drink separately, the men in their pub, the Bible, the women at home – knowledge or ignorance of these weavings adds tension to a plot which threatens to do no more than crawl from one pub to the next.

But what the two novels chiefly have in common is a preoccupation with versions of Welshness. The earlier book expressed resentment of "all those phoney novels and stories about the wry rhetorical wisdom of poetical miners, all those boring myths about the wonder and glory and terror of life in the valley towns", focusing this resentment on the character of Gareth Probert, whose verse-play *The Martyr* is clearly modelled on *Under Milk Wood*. In *The Old Devils* the Dylan-role is filled by Brydan, a national legend known only by his Christian name, distinguishable from his real-life model only by a generous extension of life-span (1913-60). It is a pity we are not given more of Brydan (*The Martyr* was Amis at his wittiest), or more, anyway, of the "colourful kind of stage-Taffy" Welshness which Peter and Gwen and Charlie and others, Welsh themselves, so often complain about – with an insistence

which suggests that Amis himself is very unimpressed.

Yet there are Welsh people who will like this novel, and they will have more reason for doing so than the woman reviewer who praised *Stanley and the Women* for its enlightened and compassionate critique of gender stereotyping. For Amis's attack on "false" boyo Welshness keeps alive the notion of a "true" Wales where he might feel properly at home. This wouldn't be an ancient kingdom of Celts, or the contemporary one which uses county-names like Dyfed rather than Pembrokeshire; least of all an Anglo-Welsh bilingual conglomerate, bilingualism being much mocked: "They went outside and stood where a sign used to say Taxi and now said Taxi/Taxi for the benefit of Welsh people who had never seen a letter X before." Rather, it would be a Wales of pubs and working villages and Orwellian decency, identifiable only negatively, by thinking about what has taken its place: "where not so long ago it had been hake and chips, bottled cockles, pork pies and pints of Troeth bitter, these days it was cannelloni, penella, stuffed, cans of Foster's, bottles of Rioja and – of course – large Courvoisiers and long panatellas, just like everywhere else." It is no use protesting that there were no good old days and that John Lewis in 1955 was already complaining about the modernization of country pubs; the point is that Amis's return to Wales has an underlying sentimentality, and its savagery is part dis-appointment that Wales has become "like everywhere else".

Documentation of how exactly it has become so allows Amis to air some familiar prejudices, some typical of his much publicized anti-Modernism, others belonging to a more private code of unacceptability: a church "converted not into a pornographic cinema but, less offensively some might have thought, into an arts centre"; "large oval dishes of uncommonly horrible finger-snacks, a vivid green or orange in colour, almost untouched, and quite right too"; "fat young left-wing activists from a weekend school ordering things like blue Curaçao with passion-fruit juice"; "young men . . . with no shirts on, satisfied with that being all right, and not bothering about looking horrible, being it too far for not bothering". The humour of such asides lies in their confident scorn, but Amis is too good a novelist to allow them to become more than asides. The centre of the novel is murkier and more ambivalent than such crustiness would suggest, and is typified by Peter's remark, apropos Alun, that the older one gets, the harder it is to be sure that anybody – Himmler or Eichmann aside – is truly a "frightful shit".

Alun is the prime example of this – a shit or not a shit? – and Amis's treatment of him shows the novelist outwitting the polemicist. "A ham and a fraud", "a bit of a charlatan", a Brydan-follower and professional Welshman whose name is suspected of having really been Alan: he is set up to be skittled down. But Amis refuses the invitation and ends up liking Alun's cheek and energy, much as he did Ronnie Appleyard's in *I Want It Now*. Alun's line in bawdy songs, his generosity at the bar, his hatred of modern art, his gratuitous rudeness to taxi-drivers, radio interviewers, wine-waiters and American homosexual academics – all this is a clear sign that the author is well disposed towards him. (Authorial sympathy is likewise granted to Malcolm, despite his being a translator from the early Welsh.) This is one of Amis's strengths as a novelist, not noticeably to the fore in recent work but making a welcome return here: "bad" characters are allowed their victories and "good" characters their defeats. Yet Amis comes down against Alun in a firmly "moral" conclusion. When Charlie, asked to be a "bullshit-detector", tells Alun that his novel is no good, Alun exacts a vicious revenge, compounding his sin of pretentious sub-literary with that of sadism: for Amis's moral universe to hold, Alun must be punished, and duly is. *The Old Devils* breaks a good many rules in its construction, not least those old-fashioned ones which he and his critics claim are foremost in his work: the plot is minimal, there is an excess of dialogue, characters share the same viewpoint and idiom to an alarming degree. Yet it always gives the impression of obeying an inner logic, part of which is that the novel's dénouement, Alun once punished, should be a cheerful one. The

reconciliation of two of the feuding older generation, and the marriage of two of the younger, gives the ending an almost Shakespearean symmetry.

Yet the mood overall is scarcely Panglossian. "Life is first boredom, then more boredom," reflects Charlie, unwittingly revising Amis's friend Philip Larkin. Charlie knows all about boredom, drinking as often as he does at The Bible; he also knows about fear, having nightmares about people with faces made of carpet and feeling a childlike panic at being left alone in the dark. The character the author most approves of here, along with Peter, Charlie belongs to that tradition of the Amis hero who would like to believe but can't, his disappointed scepticism underlined in a vignette when (rather like Evans in the poem "Welsh Ferry, West Side") he gazes from a hilltop at the local scenery:

At one time he had thought that there must have been more in such sights than he could merely see, perhaps not in them at all, behind them or beyond them but somehow connected with them, and plenty of poems had seemed to tell him the same story. But although he had stayed on the alert for quite a long while to catch a glimpse of what could not be seen, nothing answering remotely to any of his guesses or inklings had ever looked like turning up.

The rhythm of that passage is very characteristic of late Amis. His sentences often double back on themselves, as if checking their instinctive prejudices; or they manage an extra clause or *frisson* of sadness just when they seem to have run out of steam; or they detain the reader through some puzzling double negative or pedantically correct but awkward syntax. The style seems to extend sympathy, whereas what it has to relate is often embittered or dismissive.

Amis has nowhere been more embittered lately than in his handling of relations between the sexes. Here, at first, there is mostly fear and loathing: Alun and Rhianon apart, the husbands and wives in *The Old Devils* have evidently stopped liking each other, sleeping with each other, even in some cases talking to each other. When Peter, whose relationship with Muriel is worse than most, theorizes that "Part of men's earlier average age at death than women, perhaps a substantial part, might be traceable to wives driving husbands to coronary single-handedly by steadily winding them up with anxiety and rage", he voices a prejudice which could equally well belong in *Jake's Thing* or *Stanley and the Women*, as could the implication that women who drink or talk excessively are somehow (but Amis doesn't tell us how) more culpable in doing so than men. But *The Old Devils* can't fairly be called the completion of a misogynistic trilogy: the women not only mount some formidable opposition, complaining for their part that men are "all shits . . . And the ones who pretend not to be are the worst of the lot", they are treated – Rhianon at any rate – with something close to sympathy. Chapter Five is especially touching, with its account of Rhianon's feelings of intellectual inadequacy, her relations with her daughter, and – below – her embarrassed reunion with Malcolm:

She reached out and took and squeezed his hand as they walked down to the churchyard gate and took it again on the far side, in comfort or apology or what she hoped would pass as understanding, or perhaps like one person letting another know that whatever it was they were facing they would face it together.

"Caring" is not a word Amis would care for, but a passage like that conveys what he calls (in a characteristically cautious phrase used early on in the novel about Peter's manner towards Charlie) "something not utterly unlike warmth". Words at once true and kind do not come easily to a writer so much of whose energy is taken up in iconoclasm, but *The Old Devils*, like Larkin's similarly undecided "The Old Fools", manages at best to be not untrue and not unkind, and not unattracted to the emblem of a man and woman facing uncertainty together hand in hand – all of which helps make this the most affecting of Amis's novels for some time.

Manchester University Press announce the forthcoming publication, in Spring 1987, of the papers and discussions from Strathclyde University a conference on the Linguistics of Writing, a report of which was published in the TLS of July 11. One of the papers, on Freud and the "Wolf-Man" case history, by Stanley Fish, was published in the TLS of August 23.

Mistress, Muse and begetter

P. N. Furbank

J. M. COETZEE
Foe
157pp. Secker and Warburg. £9.95.
0436 1027986

One feels an instinctive wish that the *Robinson Crusoe* story should not be sexualized (even as restrained as is in the Buñuel film). Equally, one is not eager to hear Defoe himself holding forth post-Freudianly about "our darker selves". Something in us – not, I think, just nostalgia – leaps to defend the chastity both of book and of author. But indeed what this new novel of J. M. Coetzee's brings home to us is that what characterizes *Robinson Crusoe* is the absence, not just of eroticism, but of desire in general. It is, you might say, the most un-Schopenhauerian of novels. Apart from Crusoe's original vague wanderlust, Will plays very little part in it, and all the human dynamism lies, not in acting, but in reacting.

Coetzee, however, is not brushing these instincts and ideas aside. His novel, in fact, seems to be a very pointed effort to question them. According to his version, the whole origin of the celibate Crusoe legend lies in a woman, a certain Susan Barton. She becomes a castaway on Crusoe's island many years after he has become its monarch; and what she suffers there is not so much terror or loneliness as sheer frustration. It enrages her that Crusoe (or "Cruso", as he is here) seems to have no particular wish to escape, nor even any inclination to keep track of the days or to record his experiences – no desires of any kind, it would appear, except for a deadly sort of orderliness. As for Friday, he seems invincibly dumb and quite brutally unresponsive and blank: though the reason for his dumbness, at least, turns out to be the practical one that someone has cut out his tongue. Characteristically, on discovering this fact, Susan begins to worry it into unpleasant and fantastic shapes, till the imagined stump of Friday's tongue obsesses her and makes her shrink from his presence. It is the same with his life-story, of which he can of course tell her nothing and of which Crusoe

tells her conflicting things. Soon, her itching fantasy trenchantly and gloatingly turns him into a cannibal.

Susan is at last vouchsafed a view of Crusoe and Friday's masterpiece or lifework – an oddly impressive conception of Coetzee's, this. At the far end of the island they have built a series of very fine terraces in the hillside, a hundred thousand stones having gone into the making of the retaining walls. And what will Crusoe be planting there, asks Susan? "The planting is not for us", replies Crusoe. "We have nothing to plant – that is our misfortune." And he looks at her with "such sorry dignity" that, she says, she could have bitten her tongue.

Defeated by the spectacle of this "foolish kind of agriculture", Susan, for a brief time, grows Crusoe-like herself, she makes herself a cap with ear-flaps, to shut out the clamour of the wind, and becomes as deaf as Friday is mute. When, however, rescuers arrive, and the indignant and moribund Crusoe is bundled aboard a Bristol-bound merchantman, desire is resurgent in her, and with impatient tenderness she appoints herself as Crusoe's mistress and wife and as the keeper of Friday.

Susan's thought, in the face of Crusoe's barren terraces, had been that he had much better not be rescued; for the world expects colourful stories from their adventures, and what sort of meagre story was this? Nevertheless, on her arrival back in London, she is introduced to "Mr Foe", who agrees to buy her memoirs if she will write them. They are a combination of opposites – this blundering vehicle of the life-force and her patron, the cool, minicompetent author, who breeds Newgate fictions as one might breed poultry, and is said to "maintain whole regiments in Flanders" – and a prolonged manoeuvring ensues. The two conduct debates on the rights and wrongs of story-telling, sometimes swapping positions as they do so. Is it not ignoble, they ask themselves, this perpetual wish to fantasize? Could not the sober facts be made to "tell" without nonsense about cannibals? Again, does not civil law operate between authors and their creations? (Foe amuses himself, and abuses his position, by playing enjoining tricks on Susan, sending

characters out of *Roxana*, a lost daughter and her nurse Amy, to persecute her.)

Meanwhile Susan is worn down by the problem of the allatons-like Friday, whose ability to resist all her humanizing efforts begins to awe her, as if he held some life-secret which entitled him to despise her. She despairs of teaching him language, but the writerly Foe (a nice Derridan touch) tells her she is wrong to think of written language as a mere symbol for speech and finds it highly promising when Friday, given pen and paper, produces an endless series of "O's".

What is really at stake between Susan and Foe, we discern, is gender-roles. If she is to act as his Muse, and desire is properly to be channelled into fictional creation, she will have (it grows clear) to play the part of the male and the begetter, and he that of the mistress or "old whore" who is begotten upon. She finds her way into his bed, claiming the first-night privilege to straddle him, and the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, we are to imagine, is conceived. This done, there is no further use for her; null, in a concluding dream-sequence, we see her being stripped of her existence, and, falling from her open boat even before reaching Crusoe's island, sinking to the ocean floor. This slimy spot is the true home of Friday and his refusal to signify, "in place where bodies are their own signs"; and from out of his mouth, as she prises open his teeth, there issues a stream (much like his stream of "O's") which flows "without breath, without interruption . . . Soft and cold, dark and unending" to the ends of the earth.

Coetzee does what we did not want him to do and still manages to win our goodwill. It is hard to say in what spirit this inventive and provocative allegory of the creative process was composed, but one suspects a rather light-hearted one, and the more Pirandellian paradoxes, about created fictions and their right to a life of their own, occasionally fall a little flat. The myth of those unplanted terraces, though, takes hold of the imagination. One may add that, after all, his is not too bad a genesis-story for *Robinson Crusoe* – no wilder than some of the fantasies about Defoe promulgated by his biographers.

Do no evil, mean no evil

Anne Duchêne

FENELOPETITZGERALD
Innocence
224pp. Collins. £9.95.
0002231050

This is by far the fullest and richest of Fenele Fitzgerald's novels, and also the most ambitious. Her writing, as ever, has a natural authority, is very funny, warm, and gently ironic, and full of tenderness towards human beings and their bravery in living; and it also has several new elements.

For one thing, she forsakes drab English settings for Florence, which she evidently knows well, and the change has been refreshing: exotic new detail, a quickening of energy in the story, and above all a sense of tremendous physical presence in the writing, in surface-textures and sensuousness. Then, too, and startlingly, the large promise of the title is underpinned by overt admissions of allegory. The book opens by telling the legend of the Villosa Ricordanza, where in the sixteenth century a girl was mutilated to protect her from the world, unknown but adjudged unfriendly. In other words, she suffered at the hands of a loving "innocence" unable to see the world in anything but its own terms; innocence at its most obtuse, and capable of cruelty.

La Ricordanza is owned by the Ridolfi family, impoverished patricians who cannot afford to live there any more. They live now in a flat in the Piazza Limbo, no trouble with that name; nor with sensuality, the association of La Ricordanza with memory, reminding, bringing back to the heart. Their third property is a farm, Valassina; "sasso" is a stone, in Italian – where a lonely, silent nephew, Cesare, farms the hard land; and struggles to recover the lost right to call his wine *classico*.

These large ideas, not made for abstraction,

Florentine life is observed going on with Florentine vigour all round the focal theme; the sense of place, of people belonging to place, and of people working, is very intimate and happy. Pallid passages – visits to London, to English expatriates in Tuscany, to a literary party in Rome – occur when the action moves too far away from its resonant Ridolfi centre.

The head of the family, the elderly count, Giancarlo, has honed his detachment to a virtually seamless urbanity, and decided to "out-face" the last part of his life, and indeed of his character, by not minding about anything very much, though he understands acutely everything he does not deliberately evade. He lives with his sister, Maddalena, once married to an English bird-watcher, and his daughter, Chiara, aged eighteen.

Chiara returns from her English convent school, and falls into love, as into water or fire, with a very poor (but promising) young doctor from the south. (She consults her convent friend, great big bossy Barney, the book's only English character of consequence, who is gently treated by the author, but seems dismally task-like and trenchant in an Italian context. Despite rhetorical defiance of the nuns, she desperately wants to marry before she loses her youth at twenty-one, and passes from the youth at once this is achieved, to life in Chipping Camden.) Happily, Salvatore, the doctor, responds totally; he is as galvanic and intellectual an innocent as Chiara is an animal, instinctive one. Salvatore was traumatized at the age of ten when his loyal, poor, communist father took him to see the dying Gramsci in a clinic in the Piazza Limbo. He swore on the spot never to become emotionally dependent on anyone. This awkward stance he tries to maintain, even after marrying Chiara, but always feels at a disadvantage: "a serious thinking parson had no defence against innocence because he was obliged to respect it, whereas the innocent scarcely knew what respect is, or, conversely,

either". He rides a Vespa, and has violent intellectual arguments in the street.

The title refers to more than lack of respect and seriousness, however; and little is made of the cruel fable at the book's outset. The lovers are cruel, certainly, but to each other, and on the whole rather enjoyably. They cannot, on that account, assume the status of hero and heroine. For one thing, everyone else is cast in a much more heroic mould.

The title, in fact, can be seen as cheering; the author is giving innocence a hard, long look at last. It has been the primary concern of all her novels. *Offshore*, the 1979 Booker Prize winner, about people on Thames barges, was awash with innocence of all the commoner kinds; later books – notably *At Freddie's* – suggested that too much clear-eyed innocence, which stops short of noticing anyone else's impulses or motives, might lure even such a clever writer as this into self-indulgence and the *far-nant*.

Now, however, she has embraced innocence in its every sense, not only in its lamb-and-petioat extension, but as meaning unacquainted with evil, as having done no evil, and as not intending to do any. It may indeed mean unknowingness, in the young; but it means unselfishness when one is older.

Giancarlo's unselfishness is superb, in his Piazza Limbo. Messengers from the south – communist messengers carrying Gramsci's device – have inspired Maddalena, always an activist, to put the cat among Salvatore's dialectical pigeons, by buying back some land he sold in his village to marry Chiara. Gramsci said intellectuals should stay on their lands. Cesare will stay, undemanding and unselfish, though not unbent, among his stones, for the time being. "We can all go on exactly this way for the rest of our lives", he says on the last page. Perhaps the title might have been *Stoicism*. Less marketable, of course; but more widely experienced.

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Flying start

Alan Ross

ROALD DAHL
Going Solo
176pp. Cape. £7.95.
0224124078

In *Boy* Roald Dahl described his childhood and adolescence. *Going Solo* begins with his setting off to East Africa in 1938 on his first job, a three-year contract with the Shell Company. He was twenty-two years old. The first half of this second instalment of memoirs deals with the voyage out on the SS Mantola and Dahl's experiences in the hinterland of Tanganyika. The remaining hundred pages or so concern his career with the Royal Air Force, beginning with his pilot's training in a Tiger Moth in Nairobi and ending, after some hair-raising adventures in North Africa and Greece, with the author being invalided home from Palestine two years later. The year is still only 1941, so there will presumably be more excitement to come, though probably not from flying.

The general design of *Going Solo* – its large print, glamorized cover picture and postcard-size photographs slotted into the pages as if into an album – suggests a book for boys, and there is also something pedagogic about the tone of some of Dahl's writing, as if he were a prep-school master entertaining his class on a sick afternoon. On the other hand there is nothing to indicate that the book is not directed at adults. Probably Dahl makes no distinction between the two, which may account for its success. His prose is extremely simple but it is not condescending. He is a natural story-teller, and *Going Solo* describes without either false modesty or conceit some remarkable exploits. If this book were fiction, of the Biggles type, one might suspect that the writer was laying it on a bit, but one trusts Dahl from the outset, and though he certainly has a way with a story – whether of saving his shamba-boy Salimu from a black mamba or of taking on most of the

German Air Force in Greece with only a handful of Hurricanes in support – one accepts the facts as being substantially true. He is writing forty-five years after the events but the clarity of certain incidents in one's life never really dims.

If the flying chapters are those most likely to stir the imagination of the young, there is much else of interest in Dahl's book. His companions



on the voyage out included a Major and his wife who used to practice round the deck stark naked, a fellow with the unlikely name of U.N. Savory, who scattered white powder on his shoulders to suggest dandruff and so disguise the fact of his wearing a wig, and various other eccentrics, all good for an anecdote in the Maugham manner. But whereas Maugham appeared contemptuous of many of his fictional characters Dahl is generally sympathetic towards the frailties of his acquaintances.

Going Solo, though written in the age of seventy, is a young man's book. The young Dahl loves Africa, the free life, the country,

the animals. There are too many snakes for comfort, green as well as black mambas, but everything else in the day, from the breakfasts of pawpaw to the evening sundowner, enhances his natural sense of well-being. When war is declared Dahl is given a machine-gun and told to round up all German civilians, many of them armed, in Tanganyika. This is his first real task and, needless to say, he succeeds. Joining up as soon as he can, he enjoys his force life as much as he did careering about the country on behalf of Shell. He is fairly scathing about certain aspects of his training, or lack of training:

They had spent eight months and a great deal of money training me to fly and suddenly that was the end of it all. Nobody in Somalia was going to teach me anything about air-to-air combat. . . . There is no question that we were flying in at the deep end, totally unprepared for actual fighting in the air, and this, in my opinion, accounted for the very great losses of young pilots that we suffered out there. I myself survived only by the skin of my teeth.

Dahl is soon in trouble. Ordered to fly alone to join his squadron, already established in the Western Desert, he is given wrong information as to their whereabouts and is obliged to make a forced landing. He hits a boulder, suffering a fractured skull, facial wounds and temporary blindness.

It was five months before Dahl was able to leave hospital, but within a month he was back in the air. 80 Squadron was now in Greece, flying Hurricanes not Gladiators, which required a two-day crash course in monoplane flying. Arriving at Eleusis, near Athens, after a four-hour flight, Dahl is greeted with the remark that he is six months late. Totally inexperienced, he finds himself involved in almost daily actions with Messerschmitts and JU 88s. It is very dramatic to read about and a miracle that he survived. Increasing headaches from his initial crash in the desert probably saved his bacon, for though he was still right on the ground the steep turns of dog-fighting began to cause sudden blackouts. It was time to call it a day.

Peacocks of the West

Julian Symons

CYRA MCFADDEN
Rain or Shine
178pp. Secker and Warburg. £10.95.
0436273805

Cy Taillon was the most famous rodeo announcer in the United States during the years after the Second World War, which means that he was chiefly celebrated in the American West, where after his death in 1980 a newspaper columnist compared him with John Wayne as the embodiment of an ideal. In the East, where he appeared at Madison Square Garden, a sports writer remarked with surprise that he spoke gentlemanly English with no more than a faint touch of Westernism. He differed from Wayne in being only bantam size, resembled his success as a pre-Reagan extreme conservative. The list of his dislikes included, but did not end with, Jews, blacks, Easterners, intellectuals and hippies, and in the years of his fame he was a name-dropper who liked to begin sentences with "When I was fishing with the Eisenhower last summer . . .".

More, and worse. Cy Taillon was a bell-ringer in his youth, forever drunk, fighting and swearing, who reformed after a second marriage when he swore on the wedding night that he would never take another drink. He apparently kept his word, and became a pillar of the community, an arbiter of social and moral law. An intolerable figure, no doubt. Yet Cyra McFadden, only child of Cy's first marriage to a Nevada dancer Pat (who drank so hard and slept around as much as her husband), manages to make him sympathetic, and trends the line between sentimentality on one side and complaining candour on the other with immense skill. The cover photograph shows a handsome couple almost ridiculously of their period. Cy wearing a snap-brim trilby instead of his usual Stetson, Pat with a kiss curl. They carry a reminder of Bonnie and Clyde. Their daughter calls them two small people with enormous egos, peacocks in a world of mud hens. The frontispiece gives us Cy's aged three or four, "dressed as a wrong-sex, unusually short cowboy": in her childhood she was kind of mascot who lived with her parents in the 1937 blue Packard they used to move from show to show. As an adult Cyra grew away from her adored father, contacted a brief unfortunate marriage to her college professor of drama, took part in peace marches while one of her two half-brothers was fighting in Vietnam, and detested Cy's second wife Dorothy, whom she briskly describes as having enormous green eyes and a voluptuous body supported on short thick legs.

McFadden is already known as the author of *The Serfati*, a black-comedy about life in Northern California, and this book is a good deal more than the account of a love-hate relationship in which father and daughter are reconciled in the end. Letters, scrapbooks and files have gone to the creation of what is truly a family memoir, full of vivid characters wholly of the American West, remote as Eskimos from sophisticated Europe. Among them are Pat's semi-literate sister Ma Mae, her husband Wiley who is sacked after selling suits, ties and white-on-white shirts for thirty years in a department store, and Pat's second husband Roy, once Cy's follower. A diet fanatic who sent Cyra a Christmas card saying "Your health is all you've got", Roy left a refrigerator full of vitamin capsule bottles when he died of a heart attack.

The most touching of these portraits is that of Pat, whose eagerness for experience vanished after her parting from Cy. Hopelessly unsuited to the life of bridge parties, highballs and elegant small sandwiches, envied by Roy, she drifted into an acceptance of boredom, punctuated by nervous breakdowns. "When they were young my parents believed they were indestructible", Cyra McFadden says at the beginning of the book. By the end of it they are dead, along with Ma Mae and Wiley, Dorothy and Roy, and Cyra is wondering whether anybody makes sense of families, and whether all daughters see their fathers as part man, part myth. The myth predominates here, but she has made it memorable.

Spiralling to significance

Prue Shaw

JOHN FRECCERO
Dante: The poetics of conversion
Edited by Rachel Jacoff
328pp. Harvard University Press. £21.25.
0674192257

John Freccero's essays on the *Divine Comedy*, produced over a twenty-five-year span and hitherto available only to scholars in more or less obscure learned publications, are here assembled in a volume whose arrival must rank as one of the major events of Dante scholarship in recent decades. The essays range in scope from the elucidation of the significance of a single line or even phrase to the analysis of structural principles which underlie and shape the whole work. Thus assembled, they prove to have an extraordinary coherence and unity, which derive in large part from the author's conviction that Augustinian and Neoplatonic modes of thought and imagery have a determining role in the conception and shaping of Dante's masterpiece.

Critics have sometimes regretted that Augustine does not have a larger role to play in the *Comedy*: he has a seat in Paradise, but there is no episode devoted to him, suggesting perhaps that he was not a figure who particularly stirred Dante's imagination. Equally, it has been a matter of scholarly debate whether Dante even had direct knowledge of the *Timaeus*, the key Platonic text which, with the commentary on it by Chalcidius, became the principal vehicle for the transmission of Neoplatonic ideas in the Middle Ages. If Freccero is right, the *Confessions* and the *Timaeus* are texts as decisive for their influence on the shaping and structuring of Dante's imagined world as the poem which projects it as any text of Aristotle or Aquinas for his intellectual formation. The twin interlocking themes which emerge in essay after essay of this remarkable book are Dante's indebtedness on the one hand to the Augustinian model of conversion narrative as exemplified in the *Confessions*, and on the other to Neoplatonic conceptions of the movement of the individual soul in relation to the cosmic order – an indebtedness to be located less in the theological and conceptual content of the poem than in patterns of narrative organization.

The *Comedy*, Freccero argues, like the *Confessions*, is structured according to what he terms "the poetics of conversion", whose narrative logic is that of retrospective illumination: events become meaningful only in the light of the ending of the story. The experience of conversion offers a unique vantage-point from which a previous history becomes significant – unique because it corresponds in the life of the individual to the "Christ-event" in universal history, the point in time which links time to eternity and gives events in this world their ultimate significance. So the "poetics of conversion" is the counterpart in Christian autobiography of figurism in biblical narrative: a structural principle which becomes an exegetical tool, a key to significance which an episodic or fragmentary reading of the text will fail to elicit.

The story of the *Comedy* is the story of a conversion, or series of conversions, by which the sinner is saved and (inseparably from this first process and indeed for Freccero indistinguishable from it) the pilgrim becomes the poet. More exactly, the minor poet who was the pilgrim becomes the major poet who will bear witness to the events he has experienced by writing his masterpiece, for Freccero, along with a number of recent critics, sees confrontation with his own poetic past as one of the most insistently recurring themes of the *Comedy*, and asks us to see it surfacing at points in the narrative where it has not hitherto been suspected – in the encounter with Medusa at the gates to Lower Hell, for example. The double focus which holds in balance the "then" of experience and the "now" of witness – the perspective of the pilgrim and the perspective of the poet – creates a space for irony and it is the "ironic mode of the representation" which accounts for the inherently dramatic (and inherently unresolvable) ambiguity in the presentation of certain figures in the *Inferno*.

To read the *Comedy* in the light of the Augustinian model and with sensitivity to the

Neoplatonic connotations of certain images and expressions enables us, in the first instance, to get our bearings in the "Prologue" scene (*Inferno* I and II), whose strangeness and shifting imagery have often been found disconcerting. (Dante's progress is impeded by a wolf which, mysteriously, seen in another perspective, has become a river, the *fiumana* of *Inf* I, 108; and so on.) Some of the basic organizing metaphors of the poem – flight, voyage, shipwreck – are enriched by an awareness of their Neoplatonic resonance: Freccero's elucidation of Ulysses' words "dei remi facemmo alli al folle vplio" is a brilliant example of his ability to use a phrase to unlock the significance of an episode which is shown to call into question epic and Platonic notions of cyclical time by setting against them the Christian sense of human history (whether of the race or of the individual) as linear, as a progress towards a point in time which connects time with eternity.

Patterns of physical movement in the poem become more meaningful in the light of Neoplatonic analogues. In one of the most dazzling essays in the book, "Pilgrim in a Gyre", Freccero considers the path traced by Dante as he first descends into the cavity of Hell, circling to the left (anti-clockwise), and then ascends the mountain of Purgatory, circling to the right (clockwise). The conventional gloss on the pilgrim's itinerary associates left (etymologically sinister) with evil, right with good, and leaves the matter there. But the apparent discontinuity proves on examination to be a continuity: taking into account the fact that Dante turns upside down on Lucifer's flanks in order to leave Hell and emerge into Purgatory (one of the key "conversions" in the narrative), his path is in fact a continuous spiral movement through the world of matter, dizzying in its cosmic perspective and philosophical implications, which carries him towards the perfect circularity of the closing lines of the poem. Freccero is also able to explain (which no commentator had satisfactorily done) the two apparently anomalous moments in Hell when, if only briefly, Dante moves to the right and breaks the pattern.

The spiral proves to be a geometric model for many aspects of the poem's organization: the pilgrim's path; the logic of conversion narrative itself; even the metrical scheme. The critical commonplace that *terza rima* is an act of homage to the Trinity (with which it shares the structural principle of three-in-one) is dismissed on the grounds that the essence of *terza rima* is movement through time (forward propulsion but with a retrospective dimension – the spiral), and "it is not self-evident that a temporal scheme could serve to represent a timeless deity". The clue to the identification of the metrical scheme with temporality is the failure to rhyme on the name of Christ (*Cristo* "rhymes" only with itself in the poem, on some twelve separate occasions in the *Paradiso*): no mere stylistic reticence, Freccero argues, but a pointer to the truth that Christ transcends time. (But, one is forced to ask, what of the other two occasions on which Dante fails to rhyme, *per ammienda* in *Purg* 20 and *vidi* in *Par* 30, the first of which at least is in a fiercely secular, ie "temporal", context?)

Although not all parts of Freccero's argument are equally compelling – his reading of the Ugolino episode requires a degree of sophistication in the reader which few may feel equal to – he is constantly illuminating, whether his point of departure is an obscure phrase which has baffled commentators for centuries (the *plé ferno* of *Inf* I, 30, for example, which he links with the Platonic representation of disorder in the soul by the figure of a limping man), or "one of the most familiar passages in Western literature", the inscription over the Gate of Hell, whose function within the text he invites us to ponder as a preliminary to considering the status of the text in relation to reality. It is a constant and fertile theme that Dante's poem constructs, rather than describes, the reality it portrays; less obviously and more paradoxically, that the pilgrim's journey and the poet's enterprise are one and the same thing. But no summary can do justice to the subtlety, richness and learning of this invigorating book, whose author, equally at home with the complexities of medieval theology and the complexities of modern critical theory, has the rare gift of bringing both to bear on the elucidation of Dante's poem.

Keeping faith with character

C. P. Brand

PETER DE SA WIGGINS
Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and design in the "Orlando Furioso"
219pp. Johns Hopkins University Press.
£19.95.
0801826632

Peter De Sa Wiggins takes as his starting-point Galileo's admiration for the truth-to-life of Ariosto's characters, and sets out to examine each appearance of a character in *Orlando Furioso* in the light of all his or her other appearances. He comes to the conclusion that there is a degree of consistency and coherence in the characterization that has not been recognized in recent criticism, and that a pattern emerges from a study of the characters which is the key to a correct reading of the text.

This is a rather unusual line of enquiry in Ariosto scholarship of the past fifty years, which has tended to focus more on matters of narrative structure, style and language. Professor Wiggins concludes that the overall theme revealed in the interplay of the characters is man's quest for faith against the background of the world's instability. "Faith" here is given a wider connotation than Ariosto's normal use of "fede" (meaning trust or the keeping of faith with another), to embrace the impulse towards faith no longer felt to be "available" as Christian belief in the attempt of characters "to create gods out of the material of their uncertain surroundings". Rodomonte does this with the force of his sword, Orlando with a blind pursuit of chivalric ideals which brings more harm than good to those he attempts to serve. Ruggiero has altruistic intentions but has to learn how to integrate them with altruistic behaviour. Rinaldo and Astolfo are exceptions: the former is not a model of prudence, as has often been claimed, but a "gran pedone" (an earthbound creature living in a moral vacuum) and Astolfo similarly does not hunger after the absolute but represents "the freedom to correct one's mistakes by stepping out of character". Of the major characters, Bradamante alone fully exemplifies Ariosto's highest value of "faith in another human being" in her constant devotion to Ruggiero.

There is a great deal of sense in this and Wiggins's sensitive reading of the poem brings out many interesting points of interpretation, some of them new and others needing re-emphasizing. I don't think anyone has looked so closely at the characterization as a whole and it is revealing to see the degree of con-

sistency that Ariosto seems to achieve. Wiggins shows that he is closely familiar not only with the *Furioso* but also with Ariosto's sources, and he has a good grasp of the secondary literature.

The thesis as a whole, however, is not totally convincing. While very largely eschewing allegory, the author is concerned to establish what each character "represents" – which leads to some rather over-elaborate conclusions; as if Ariosto's defence of the apparently faithless Ginevra:

Morally, the spirit of transcendence prevails over the spirit of denial, asserting the superiority of the irrationally loyal and altruistic self over the predatory egotism and the cold logic of the self that exploits human weakness by taking advantage of the world's instability and of human nature's propensities to accept false illusions as promises of certainty and security.

And in order to define a character neatly in terms of the overall patterns some of Wiggins's interpretations are strained: I find that he exaggerates the mischief Orlando is responsible for – Olimpia becomes "a thoroughly bad woman", and Orlando is held to "champion injustice" in rescuing her; and to attach responsibility for Isabella's subsequent misfortunes to Orlando's rescue of her seems perverse. Wiggins thinks she would have been happier as a thirteenth-century slave. Similarly I find the author's reading of Rinaldo's adventures clever but unconvincing: given his "moral vacuum", his championing of the female sex in the Ginevra episode (Canto 4) and the ghastly story (Canto 43) is, says Wiggins, to be viewed ironically. In the one case his lack of seriousness is said to be evidenced by his failure to reform the Scottish law that condoned the unjust treatment of women, in the other Rinaldo's prudence in not testing his wife's fidelity is evidence of the lack of "fede" which the poem is concerned to celebrate. This is not how generations of readers have taken these episodes and I don't think Ariosto intended us to – we don't switch on a warning light each time Rinaldo appears and prepare to resist his eloquent speeches as issuing from a moral vacuum.

While the characters' consistency is indeed quite impressive (and Wiggins does persuade us not to underestimate it), there are other constraints on Ariosto: the pattern is as evident in the succession of episodic material culled from classical and romance sources to which one or other of the major characters has to be attached. And a further function the characters have to serve is that of the literary satire: the poem is not only about faith and irrationality but about fiction and reality – as of course Cervantes was quick to understand.

Misanthropy abroad

Jim Crace

SHIVA NAIPAUL
An Unfinished Journey
136pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
02411943X
Beyond the Dragon's Mouth: Stories and pieces
424pp. Sphere. Paperback, £3.95.
0349124930

The last paragraphs that Shiva Naipaul wrote before his fatal heart attack in 1985 concerned a spidery, middle-aged, unsuccessful Sinhalese called Tissa. Tissa possessed an unplastered brick and corrugated iron house, a thousand-volume library, a local but unprofitable reputation as a short story writer, and a damaging taste for arrack. He dreamed of escape from his tropical island to the jam-pots of Nigeria.

When the two men met, Naipaul was researching the book which is now presented in fragmentary, unpolished form as *An Unfinished Journey* and which, together with *Beyond the Dragon's Mouth*, assembles both the writer's warm-hearted Trinidadian stories and some of his most atmospheric and heartfelt journalism. Naipaul was en route for Australia ("A society given over to a reflexive philistinism that could border on barbarism") and was grumpily "stopping over" in Colombo. He was not much enamoured with Sri Lanka. The water was brackish, the locals murderous or sentimental, the British Council unhelpful. He was only there (if the reader is to take his irritability as more than simply a narrative device) because home – Trinidad? England? India? – was the one place less comfortable, more exasperating than "abroad".

As these books of political, autobiographical and travel writing demonstrate, Naipaul (despite a face that strangers described as "sympathetic") was no chummy socialite. If his self-portrait is to be trusted, he had become adept at ruffling feathers with his fustidiousness, his

impatience, his lack of social graces, his abrasiveness, his preference for truth over diplomacy. He boasts the rare distinction of having been expelled by the Northern Land Council near Darwin, Australia, as recorded in one essay in *An Unfinished Journey*. His offence was to label the aborigines "primitive" while eating a Chinese meal as a guest of their white and liberal representatives.

Whatever his charms off the page, Naipaul does not present himself in print as a man who makes concessions, suffers fools or relishes chatter. His misanthropy is amusing, notably when dealing with the putrefaction of Pope Paul ("very small, very pale, very dead"); or the white adherent of Eastern Philosophy who gazed while hot with hepatitis, or the British cleric at a Ugandan Asian camp on Dstmoor who had set up a Hindu temple, explaining "It's an example of practical Christianity at work." But the question arises: did this obsessive traveller, this global agnostic "ss out of place and es, restless in an English country church as in a mosque or a temple", actually like strangers, foreigners? One imagines not.

Yet here he is in Sri Lanka, uncharacteristically patient and gracious with Tissa, enduring the man's intellectual innocence, the two-hour bus journey to his home outside Colombo, the "brown water" and "glutinous rice" which he is offered for washlag and eating. Was Naipaul struck, as the reader of these closing sections of *An Unfinished Journey* is bound to be, by the eerie parallels between the life that Tissa lives and the life that Naipaul himself might have led had he not escaped – a tropical island, a limited, local fame, and that "exalted form of tranquility", an immersion in books? At the age of nineteen, Naipaul sailed out of the Dragon's Mouth straits of Trinidad towards University College, Oxford, and the higher trances of drink, travel and literary celebrity. What he did not fully appreciate, he writes, is that "his ship was not bearing him from darkness to enlightenment but from ignorance to confusion".

It was this "confusion", a physical and emo-

tional dislocation, which was to shape and entrench Naipaul's sense of deracination and which was to make him one of "higher journalism's" most mordant, ill-at-ease, uncompromising and courageous observers. What is distinctive about these books – in which, most notably, the Nehru dynasty and the various paranoias of pigmentation come under scrutiny – is the recurrent evidence of Naipaul's idiosyncratic anti-racism. It was idiosyncratic, perhaps, because of the writer's "denuded Indian ancestry" with its perplexing Anglo-Caribbean overlay. For him, there were "no tribal hopes or structures upon which to lean". Still, like all immigrants from the New Commonwealth, he had to endure the "Kololed Pimple Need Not Apply" notices in Earl's Court bedsits and the incomprehension of accommodation agents who regarded his Oxford-educated Indo-Caribbean background as "a compound sin [which] was a challenge to reason". Yet he refused to make what he identified in the Australian aborigines as "the flight into blackness". In his view, "aboriginality" end (in a marvellously cogent essay in *Beyond the Dragon's Mouth*, "The Rise of the Rastafarianism") Rastafarianism were "empty assertions" and "an escape from the challenges of history": "Blackness threatens to engulf the life of the mind and the imagination" because "Soul" eats up intellect; rhythm replaces struggle.

His descriptions of "kolored" Londoners in the 1960s as "like black bucks" and his dismay at both the "docility" and "leak of introspection" of newly arrived Asian refugees from Uganda and the "tribal simplicity" of Liverpudlians, might be counted racist and snobbish if written by a white journalist. But what might seem xenophobic in a writer such as his one-time roving colleague on the *Spectator*, Patrick Malaher, appears as toughness in Naipaul. His "blackness" and "Third Worldness" (both concepts which he dispatches in essays collected here) and his capacity to present disquieting arguments in seductive prose place him (almost) beyond criticism.

YALE

MONET: Nature into Art

John House

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Between arbitrary frontiers

Robert Irwin

PETER JACKSON and LAURENCE LOCKHART (Editors)
The Cambridge History of Iran
Volume Six: The Timurid and Safavid Periods
1,087pp. Cambridge University Press. £65.
0521 20094 6

If Shah Isma'il had triumphed over the Ottoman forces at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514, then "Iran" might have happened somewhere else. "Iran" might have included Azerbaijan perhaps, but not the rest of Persia; it would certainly have included central and eastern Turkey, the southern Caucasus and northern Syria. Until Chaldiran, the militant Safavids and their extremist Shi'i supporters, the Turkoman cavalry (*Qizilbash* or "Red Caps"), had recruited from among the nomadic tribesmen of Turkey and Syria, had had contact with heterodox movements in Turkey and Syria and had engaged in a desultory *jihad* against the Christian principalities of the Caucasus. Fifteenth-century Iran was a predominantly Sunni Muslim territory and there was little in Shah Isma'il's ancestry to suggest that he would establish a régime which would do more than any other to give the country we now recognize as Iran a sense of national identity and transfer its religious allegiance from Sunnism to Shi'ism. Reading Volume Six of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, which covers the period from 1501 to 1736, one is again and again struck by the arbitrary and fluid nature of Iran's political, religious and cultural frontiers.

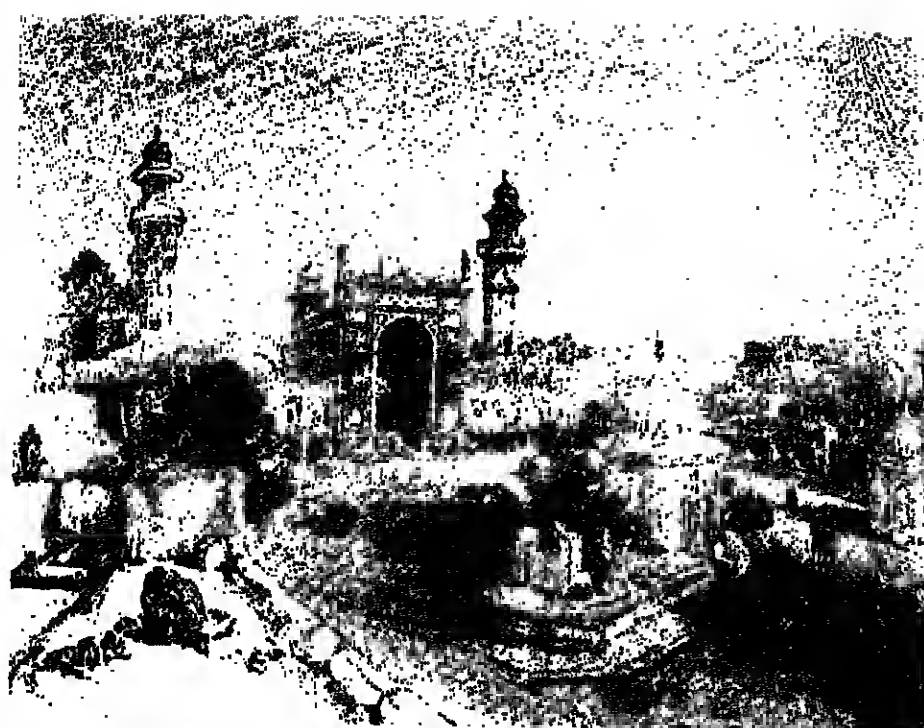
The book deserves a somewhat longer title: *The Cambridge History of Iran, Iraq, Eastern Turkey and Afghanistan, plus bits of what are now Pakistan and Soviet Central Asia*. The man who undertakes the narrative political history of this vast, turbulent and poorly charted area needs courage as well as learning, for on many issues he will, as it were, be going on first. H. R. Roemer has both, and his 350-page survey of the history of the Jalayrids, Muzaferids, Sarbadars, Timurids, Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu and Safavids (as well as scores of less famous régimes, such as those of the Injujids of Fars or the *maliks* of Shabankara), is the most substantial scholarly account to have appeared so far.

At times the task of making sense of the chaos between the breakdown of Mongol Ilkhanate in the early fourteenth century and the establishment of the Safavid régime in the early sixteenth century has defeated Roemer. He breaks off from an account of family strife among the early Aq Qoyunlu, observing "it would be otiose to recount the details of this anarchy". But there is no shame here, and if there are wiser men than he who have discerned in this history "a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern", they have kept quiet about it. Indeed, it is often difficult to know which bits of the anarchy do deserve a detailed narrative. Even the unity conferred on the region at the end of fourteenth century by the would-be world conqueror, Timur, was more notional than real. (Incidentally, it is extraordinary to note that Roemer's narrative of the career of Timur is the first serious account of this major figure to appear in English since Hilda Florkham's *Tamurlane the Conqueror*. Since Florkham, the headmistress of a grammar school, knew no oriental languages and published in 1962, there are many revisions to her story in Roemer's account.)

Even if there is no overall pattern, Roemer does provide master ideas which help make sense of some of the story. Whereas the history of Iran from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries was shaped by the impact of the Turks and Mongols coming from the east, in the period that followed Iran was subjected to the migration of three successive waves of Turkomans moving back east out of Anatolia into Iraq and Iran. These tribal confederations established the Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu and Safavid régimes. The importance of "Folk Islam" is another of Roemer's master ideas. Hitherto, a recurring problem has been to know which régimes were Sunni and which were Shi'a - and indeed what would be meant by saying that they were one or the other. The Jalayrids of Baghdad and Tabriz favoured Shi'i names and burial grounds, but issued coinage with Sunni Muslim inscriptions. The Sarbadars

seem to have started off as definite Shi'is and ended up equally definitely as Sunnis. Timur sometimes persecuted the Shi'is, but at other times acted as their patron. There is absolutely clear evidence that Jehan Shah, "The Bull" of the Qara Qoyunlu, was a Shi'i - and a Sunni. Most curiously and crucially, the Safavids started out as the shirkis of a Sunni Sufi shrine at Ardabil, then transformed themselves into the messianic leaders of a militant extremist Shi'i movement, but ended up as the rulers of a moderate "orthodox" Shi'i empire. Roemer traces a shift in meaning of the word "Sufi" from "mystic" to "active Muslim". He, convincingly, places the conversion of the Safavid leaders to Shi'ism significantly later than Roger Savory did in his *Iran under the Safavids* (1980). He also sees figures like Junayd, Haydar and Isma'il as responding to needs of their time *Qizilbash*, following rather than manipulating them. For a long time Isma'il was effectively the prisoner of his devotees. Above all, the Shi'ism of the Safavids and their predecessors is set in the context of a confessionally ambiguous Folk Islam, free from academic or institutional control, centred on devotion to shrines and the family of the Prophet and incorporating elements of Turco-Mongol paganism. In this context Isma'il's creed - "a syncretism of neoplatonistic Islam and Shamanism" - appeared quite normal. In the thirteenth century the citizens of Kashan had a horse saddled and led out of the gates of the city every morning, so that the Mahdi would always find a mount waiting for him, should he turn up. In the seventeenth century, the streets of Isfahan were cleared of all males once or twice a week so that Shah Sulaiman and his 800-strong harem might ride by, unobserved by conspicuous eyes. The transition from mystic radicalism to secular monarchy, a leading theme in this section of Iran's history, is a fascinating and still only half-understood development.

It is disappointing that Roemer's repeated emphasis on the historical importance of Folk Islam receives little support from the chapters on religion and spiritual movements by B. S. Amoretti and S. H. Nasr. Amoretti, it is true, does devote three pages to the curious practices of the *Qizilbash* - organic rites, beard kissing and eating yogurt on tombstones - but both Amoretti and Nasr are keener on that extremely clever, cerebral strain of medieval Iranian mysticism that was uncannily successful in anticipating the twentieth-century preoccupations of the *Erasmian-Jahrbuch* and *Studies in Comparative Religion*. Nasr writes with an apologetic purpose. He asserts without evidence that the Safavid Order was from the very



A detail of William Simpson's sketch of the mosque of Wazir Khan, Lahore, March 1860; it is taken from *Mildred Archer's* *Visions of India: The sketchbooks of William Simpson 1859-62* (138pp. Phaidon, £19.95, 0 7148 2429 1).

beginning "inwardly Shi'i", thereby conveniently reconciling current Shi'i belief with modern research. Generally, he is extremely reluctant to acknowledge that the Safavid era was not a golden age in all areas of intellectual and cultural activity. The steady flow of superlatives has an oddly depressing effect.

Ehsan Yarshater, who contributes an article on poetry in the Timurid and Safavid periods, has no such compunctions. Much of the material he covers has more in common with parlor games than with what we would recognize as literature, but his discussion of Persian amphibology, acrostics, chronograms, conceits and lipograms is fascinating - as is his discussion of the conventions of poetic imagery. He breaks off at one point to warn that the "impression should be avoided however that Persian lyrics are mere maudlin poems populated by dipsomaniacal lovers bent on self-mortification and by irritable, obstreperous youths threatening their wretched lovers with daggers and swords". Both Yarshater and Annemarie Schimmel (who writes on "Hafiz and his contemporaries") provide extremely good guides not just to what was written but also on how to read it. Schimmel's account of the poetry of Hafiz of Shiraz gains by being mediated by a sensibility formed by Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* and by English metaphysical poetry.

The empire of Persian poetry stretched further than the territories of the Timurid and Safavid Shahs, and some of the best poetry in Persia was written in India. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Ottoman Sultan, Selim, and the Circassian Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, Qansuh al-Ghawri, were both writing poetry in Persian, the Persian Shah Isma'il was writing poetry in Turkish. Iran's cultural frontiers were curiously drawn.

It would be a major undertaking to discuss even perfunctorily the other contributions to European contacts, institutions, commerce, economy and society, science, mathematics, carpets, painting and other art forms, but it would be wrong not to note that, in my opinion, Robert Hillenbrand's contribution on "Safavid Architecture" is a model of how to write architectural history - incisive, thoughtful and based on personal familiarity with the sites. All the contributors have had to tackle contentious matters, and it is a pity that *The Cambridge History* format, devised originally to cover areas on which there was a fair degree of consensus, has not allowed more annotation in this volume. All the contributions are useful. Some are very readable. Together they make up a very fat, rather expensive book. I hope that in the near future the publishers will split it up into parts and publish it in paperback.

ters on emporia and the patterns of commodities.

Chaudhuri does not want to discuss the failure of the Asian economies to turn capitalist on their own, but he drops a number of hints about the importance of Indian Ocean trade (as opposed, implicitly, to that of the Atlantic) for the rise of capitalism in the West. He is a recognized expert on the early East India Company; so his observations have force, although they could have been developed further. He succeeds in showing "the strength of commercial capitalism in Asia", but he overstates the independence of the merchants from the great political systems of the East; his ports of trade stand a little too much on their own. The Chinese, for example, had more to do (negatively) with the rise of Malacca, and later (positively) with that of Canton, than is consistent with the idea of merchants quite as separate from the state as Chaudhuri would seem to like them to have been. But that is just a matter of nuance: the structures of pre-nineteenth-century trading are clearly set out, and implicitly, so are their differences from the structures which succeeded them.

So why do I feel faintly dissatisfied with the book, despite its qualities? Partly because it takes on too much: a thousand years of Asia cannot be distilled into 200 pages without losing a lot of necessary detail. Such a time-span is difficult to combine with a comparable depth of knowledge; for example, Chaudhuri is noticeably less descriptive and more critical of his

material after 1400 or so. But the dissatisfaction mostly derives from Chaudhuri's introduction, and from his problem-posing, which lead us to expect more than he gives. He starts with Braudel's concept of a Mediterranean civilization, which clearly (and justly) has had a profound effect on him. But Braudel was interested in the land, not just the sea; with peasants and rulers, not just merchants; with production, not just circulation; with material culture, not just capitalism. Chaudhuri is, too, but he never gets around to discussing them. He constantly emphasizes how the organization of production is a key to understanding trade; he presses home the difference and interdependence of bulk trade and luxury trade (a fundamental principle for the level of economic organization of a whole society); he stresses that parts of India (and elsewhere) were heavily dependent on trade for their very subsistence by the seventeenth century. But he never tells us how the relationship between trade and production actually worked - about the role of inland cities, for example, or the organization of the productive process. He looks at the world through the eyes of his merchants, and he has some of the same blind spots. In the last line of the book he tells us that production should appropriately be the object of a separate study; this would not matter so much if Chaudhuri had not set up his argument as if he were going to tell us in this study. There is a fine book on trade; but the Braudelian vision will have to wait for Volume Two.

Pressure on the periphery

John Keep

DONALD J. RALEIGH
Revolution on the Volga: 1917 in Saratov
378pp. Cornell University Press. \$35.75.
08014 17902

Historians of the French Revolution have familiarized us with the way inhabitants of provincial towns reacted to the stirring events in the capital from July 1789 to Thermidor and beyond. Is it not time for comparable studies of *la révolution municipale* in the Russia of 1917? Alas, the sources are sparser and heavily biased in favour of the victors. Martyn Lyons could hardly have dissected the Terror in Toulouse if the Jacobins had still been in power there. Nevertheless, a start was made some fifteen years ago by Werner Mosse and others. Following these pioneers (but granting them minimal recognition), Donald J. Raleigh, in *Revolution on the Volga: 1917 in Saratov*, has written the first book-length monograph on developments in a Great Russian provincial city.

Saratov is a good choice. A bustling market town and the administrative centre for a sizeable agricultural region lying along the right bank of the Volga, by 1917 it had a population of 300,000, swollen by evacuees from the war zone, some of them invalid soldiers whose main objective was to avoid return to the front. The harvest was bad and the peasants preferred to eat their surplus produce rather than sell it at the low prices fixed by the Provincial Government. Shops were emptying, factories closing for lack of fuel or raw materials. The unemployed and other denizens of Saratov's insular slums seethed with discontent. This was fertile soil for Bolshevism, which, as Raleigh demonstrates, was very much a home-grown product, a response to the new city fathers' inability to cope with pressing practical problems. They expended their energies on political intrigue. It was one thing to depose the tsarist governor, another to establish a viable democratic administration. Experienced tsarist officials were harassed or replaced by activists in a host of self-constituted organs for food supply, land reform; "workers' control" and so forth.

Saratov differed from Petrograd in that it did not experience a period of "dual power". From the start, the local soviet overshadowed the reconstituted municipal Duma and its representative provisional executive committee. Most soviet deputies supported the moderate socialists, but as early as April 1917 the Bolsheviks captured six of the nine seats on the Presidium. All the local politicians were under heavy pressure from their mass following. Workers and soldiers held demonstrations and

prate rallies as news arrived of each successive crisis in Petrograd. Raleigh contends that "the revolution in Saratov unfolded as a unique interaction between local structural conditions and larger events and issues", but it seems that the city was typical rather than unique (which enhances one's interest in what happens there), and that the revolutionary impulses all went one way, from centre to periphery. Admittedly, Lenin took account of the collapse of authority in the provinces when planning his October coup, but this scarcely constitutes "interaction".

The main lesson of the Saratov story is surely that there was considerable popular support for co-operation between all the left-wing parties, since the local Bolshevik leaders were "compromisers" and unhappy with Lenin's intransigent stance. But hopes for political stability and peaceful progress were nullified by the drift of events at the all-Russian level. Instead of the socialist coalition government which the Bolshevik slogan of "soviet power" seemed to embody, Saratov got a narrow dictatorship which manipulated the soviets and other popular organizations to achieve its partisan aims. By October 27 the new bosses had already "prohibited newspapers and printshops from putting out anti-Bolshevik literature"; within a month they had dissolved the municipal Duma, sequestered the banks, and given a green light to the enraged *soldatskies*. In the November elections for the Constituent Assembly the extreme left won 38 per cent of the vote, a mere 6 per cent more than conservatives and liberals; and among civilian electors the margin was narrower still. Yet this mattered little politically. The Bolsheviks' destructive policies would provoke the "Vendée on the Volga" in 1918, when many inhabitants of Saratov province supported a "democratic counter-revolution" led by moderate socialist parliamentarians.

Raleigh ends his account before this final act in Saratov's tragedy. He dissociates himself firmly from those who have interpreted the October revolution "in terms of conspiracy, historical accident, or political manipulation" or have been misled by hindsight. Unfortunately this aim, in itself justifiable, leads to an all but uncritical endorsement of the maximalist position. Seventy years after the event we need, not the eulogy of outdated radical cliché, but an appreciation of the revolution's human and spiritual cost, and of the self-defeating nature of a mass anti-war movement that sought to combat violence by violence. Saratov's local leaders do not come to life in these pages. Yet Raleigh's exemplarily thorough study of the published material - he was denied access to Soviet archives - does cast fresh light on the Russian Revolution from an unfamiliar angle, and is welcome for that reason.

More muddle than mud

Helen Szamuely

CHRISTOPHER DOBSON and JOHN MILLER
The Day We Almost Bombed Moscow: The Allied War in Russia
288pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £12.95.
0340 33723 0

Soviet historians have always maintained that the Allied intervention in Russia in 1918 was a capitalist plot to overthrow the nascent Soviet republic. Christopher Dobson and John Miller began writing their book half-believing this interpretation, but as their research proceeded they changed their minds. *The Day We Almost Bombed Moscow* shows convincingly that the intervention was in fact a muddle. The various governments disagreed in their aims. An attempt to salvage the Eastern front turned imperceptibly into unwarrantable and unpopular meddling in Russia's internal affairs. By October 1918 the Bolshevik had replaced the *Boche* as the enemy. Unwilling troops were sent to Russia with little explanation of their role. Officers volunteered in the mistaken belief that conditions would be better than they had been on the Western front. What Murmansk and Omsk lacked in mud, they made up for in ice, but life expectancy was longer. Much of this seems to have come as news to

Monarch in error

Steven Runciman

PASHANKO DIMITROFF
Boris III of Bulgaria: Toiler, citizen, King
1894-1943
202pp. Lewes: Book Guild. £8.95.
086332 1402

Of all the heads of state who supported Germany in the Second World War, Tsar Boris of Bulgaria remains the most enigmatic. Why did this sensitive, civilized man, who disliked both Hitler and Mussolini, throw in his lot with them, with disastrous results for himself, his dynasty and his country? His father, Ferdinand of Coburg, an obscure princeling, but well-connected and very wealthy, had managed, in spite of the enmity of the Great Powers and the mistrust of everyone who met him, to turn a down-trodden Ottoman province into a viable modern state. But in his later years he had made two disastrous mistakes. After a successful war against the Turks he threw away his gains by quarrelling and being humiliated by his Balkan allies; and he tried to reconvert himself by joining the Central Powers in the First World War. The collapse of Bulgaria in 1918 forced him to abdicate and leave his throne to his son, Boris, a young man of twenty-four.

Unlike his Austrian-born father and his Italian-born mother, both of them Catholics, Boris had been born in Bulgaria and had been converted at the age of two to Orthodoxy, the faith of the vast majority of his people. These assets, combined with a simple, democratic manner, assured him of popular liking. But he was inexperienced and isolated. Ferdinand had given Bulgaria a parliamentary constitution but had kept parliamentary elections well under his control. Boris had to deal with a populist Agrarian government that maintained power by intimidation and corruption until 1923, when it was overthrown in a bloody coup by a military junta, with a university professor installed as prime minister. Both régimes were marked by bomb outrages and assassinations; and neither took any notice of the King.

The junta collapsed early in 1926; and Boris was then able to introduce genuine parliamentary government, which lasted under a series of worthy prime ministers for eight years. Indeed, the General Election of 1931 was the only example of genuinely free elections ever held in Bulgaria. But economic problems and the lawlessness of Macedonian irredentists provoked another military coup in 1934, to which the King, probably under a threat to his life, gave his approval. The constitution was mod-

ified. Political parties were forbidden, and Parliament became a mere debating chamber. The military leaders retired in 1936; and the King then took over the government, maintaining the restricted constitution. He was thus in control of the country when the Second World War broke out; and he must be held responsible for the decision to allow German troops to enter Bulgaria as allies in the spring of 1941, and to declare war on Britain and the United States later that year. But he would not allow Bulgarian troops to be used elsewhere than in the Balkans; and his refusal to send any to Russia led in 1943 to a stormy interview with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, on his return from which he mysteriously died, poisoned, it was generally believed, on Hitler's orders.

Boris III of Bulgaria is tiresomely arranged. With the deliberate attempt "to grip the reader's attention", it opens with the King's death, before we have had the full political background to it; and the book fizzles out in an anticlimax. But Pashanko Dimitroff has studied his sources carefully and judiciously. He shows sympathy with the King and some admiration for him, while admitting the curious deviousness of his character and mistakes in his policy. He argues convincingly that Bulgaria could probably have stayed neutral in 1941. (Hitler would have been shy of attacking a country that traditionally enjoyed the protection of Russia. But Boris may have been moved by his country's economic and military ties with Germany; and he may have wished to spare his people the fate of their neighbours in Yugoslavia.) There is some repetition in the later chapters, and there are some curious mistakes. Dimitroff paints a moving picture of the five Balkan Crown Princes coming together for Boris's eighteenth birthday, all of them Orthodox and all under age, except for Constantine of Greece, who was aged forty-four. In fact, Ferdinand of Rumania was forty-seven and Catholic, Danilo of Montenegro was forty-one and Alexander of Serbia twenty-four. He quotes Boris as mentioning Maximilian of Mexico as his godfather. But Maximilian died twenty-six years before Boris was born and was actually his father's godfather. Dimitroff's general picture of the King, however, is convincing. Boris was an intelligent man, an excellent linguist, well read in history, a first-class ornithologist and botanist with a passion for driving railway engines; not without humour, but withdrawn and shy except with his family and old friends. Like his father before him he made the wrong decision when Europe was plunged into war. But until then he had been a monarch worthy of sympathy and respect.

The Cultural Ambassador

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GAVIN EWART

Building up a lead

P. K. O'Brien

FRANÇOIS CROUZET
De la Supériorité de l'Angleterre sur la France
596pp. Paris: Perrin. 170fr.
2262 00368R

The leading economic historian of the United Kingdom is now a French professor, who directs a research centre for the study of European civilization at the Sorbonne. That is what one learns from reading this collection of articles (which, with footnotes, cover 581 pages of text and represent the fruits of some twenty-five years of research, reflection and academic debate on the development of the British economy over its golden years from 1700 to 1914).

François Crouzet has earned a place of the highest distinction in a foreign profession, not by transposing fancy and fashionable concepts from Paris into the soberly empirical field of economic history, but by pursuing the subject in a rather English way. First of all he is obviously a master of primary sources. The patient stints in British and French archives which provided the infrastructure for his *grande thèse*, *L'Économie britannique et le Blocus continental 1806-13* (1958) and for a more recent study (written in impeccable English) about our *First Industrial Revolution* (1985) again bear fruit in this collection in two fascinating perspectives, culled from the documents, on "The Sources of England's Wealth: Some French views in the eighteenth century" and "The Economic Consequences of the French Revolution: Views From London".

Crouzet is always elegant and wary in describing the perceptions that these two antagonistic neighbours have maintained of each other's national character, economic success, culture and political intentions over long sweeps of history from the time of the Revolution and Napoleon right through to the eightieth anniversary of the Entente Cordiale in 1984. But the serious point behind this highly entertaining history of Anglo-French attitudes

should not be missed. "Il me semble", writes Crouzet, "en tout cas que les clivages entre 'philes' et 'phobes' ont presque toujours été sensiblement différents sur les deux rives de la Manche, par leur nature et par leurs positions sur l'échiquier politique, et que cette distorsion a été un obstacle considérable à la communication sérieuse et à la compréhension authentique entre les deux pays."

Second, his republished articles reveal Crouzet as a dedicated, but never desiccated, quantifier. He appreciates that statistics are merely a preface to historical enquiry and he has used numbers to write a classic (and here slightly revised) paper on the role of exports in the long-term development of the British economy; to delineate the place of Empire in British commerce from 1846 to 1914; to analyse the nature and basis for Anglo-French trade during the Belle Époque; and to estimate the increasing importance of British coal for the French economy at local and national levels from 1841 to 1913.

Third, Crouzet displays an enviable authority over the ever-increasing bibliography of books and articles that modern economic historians are somehow supposed to digest in order to be well read in their field. He secured that command in the most efficient way by writing an excellent textbook in French (now translated into English as *The Victorian Economy*, 1982). His wide, deep and critical reading of the secondary literature is displayed in this collection; first in the form of an up-to-date version of an indispensable survey on "Capital Formation During the Industrial Revolution" and then in a useful assessment of recent cliometric contributions to our understanding of the Industrial Revolution. Crouzet is guarded in his welcome for modern applications of theory and econometrics to the past. He judiciously advises his colleagues to keep their bridges open to history. Finally, and in this same vein, his formidable skills in economic history and deep knowledge of Britain are deployed with irony and telling effect to rebuff the pretensions of the late Fernand Braudel to invade territory outside his range and well north of the Mediterranean.

Crouzet's reputation as an economic historian surely rests more than anything else on the essay he published in *Annales* twenty years ago, comparing economic growth in England

and France over the course of the eighteenth century (reprinted here as the first chapter). In it he deploys statistical evidence to argue that the supposedly backward and stagnant French economy may have grown more rapidly than its rival across the Channel. But more important in terms of his professional influence, Crouzet uses the comparative method in an innovative way to isolate and rank the peculiar natural and historical endowments of the British Isles which, by 1815, had clearly pushed that economy ahead of North-Western Europe and upwards into the elevated position of First Industrial Nation. This article came at a moment when the insularity of European economic history was breaking down but it should, I believe, be accorded the accolade of "seminal", because it pulled forward a wave of literature in economic history that was deliberately and self-consciously comparative. Crouzet's influence can be easily detected not only in recent historical texts with a European frame of reference but in nearly all subsequent publications about the First Industrial Revolution and the economic history of France. His essay provoked debate and inspired books and numerous articles concerned to probe into and explain contrasts in the long-term economic development of France and Britain, and, *mutatis mutandis*, of all European countries.

Crouzet is too modest to claim he founded a "school" but he has been "entrepreneurial" enough to create a minor industry. Now, and happily encouraged by Pierre Chaunu, he has taken the opportunity not merely to update this original article but to review his own territory and to offer us his "Critiques et auto-critique d'une comparaison". His revisions and analysis deserve serious consideration from historians of both countries and especially from those "on the left" predisposed to scorn any notion that the Revolution stifled promising tendencies in the economic development of France that were strong and evident before 1789.

Although Crouzet accepts some downward revision of the French growth-rate before the Revolutionary era (particularly for the agricultural sector), recent research on Britain also suggests that its economy grew at a slower pace over the eighteenth century. Crouzet's model of two economies advancing at comparable rates down to the 1780s still holds. Thereafter,

and for a variety of reasons, the British economy steamed ahead, not least because over the subsequent three decades the Royal Navy defeated French plans to damage British commerce on the sea-lanes of the world. Crouzet's *Blocus* remains the definitive study of the failure of Napoleon's strategy to damage the English economy, but his essays have widened the focus of that book to cover the struggle for dominance in the international economy between Yorktown and Waterloo.

Above all Crouzet appreciates that longer and deeper perspectives are required to understand why Britain industrialized and urbanized ahead of France, and he is not inclined to abandon the insights to be gained from systematic comparisons across countries, despite the attacks that this method invites from fastidious critics who argue that its validity can only be ascertained by isolating and ranking the unique advantages possessed by the British economy. The method has helped Crouzet and other historians to separate significant from trivial factors. It is now clear that, relative to the British Isles, France suffered far more severely from the demographic and political crises of the seventeenth century: lacked adequate supplies of cheap energy and (acre for acre) did not provide a hospitable geographical environment for the diffusion of the new varieties of crops which raised productivity in British agriculture. Other contrasts in the connections between economic growth on the one hand and, on the other, the English revolution of the 1640s – proto-industry, nonconformity, labour-costs, fiscal and financial systems are exposed by Crouzet as too weak and not sufficiently different from France to matter. At this macro-level the comparisons are always illuminating and in the hands of such a stylish and experienced historian often dazzling. But maybe the time has come for more specific studies of particular industries, sectors of husbandry and branches of commerce?

Meanwhile, and at a time when the relative retardation of the contemporary British economy is high on the agenda for academic research, it seems ironic, perhaps even symbolic, that a French scholar should be ahead of his English colleagues at their own game of economic history, and, moreover, has chosen to demonstrate that prowess in a collection of essays with a redundant if provocative title.

With the right institutions

Barry Supple

NATHAN ROSENBERG and L. E. BIRDZELL
How the West Grew Rich: The economic transformation of the industrial world
353pp. Tauris. £16.50.
1850430160

For 200 years and more, explaining the wealth of nations has provided a perennial theme for economists and economic historians. Ideally (although not always in practice), since economic processes involve the operation of markets and laws, the application of labour and capital, and the disposition of resources, the theory of growth ought to be concerned with systems of property ownership, income distribution, decision-making, social class and power.

"Orthodox" economics has been only intermittently concerned with such issues. Admittedly, there have been important attempts to extend analytical horizons in the twentieth century, partly because economic depression during the interwar years meant that the adequate performance of market economies could no longer be taken for granted; and partly because the inception of growth in "pre-industrial" economies presented an intellectual as well as a practical problem after 1945. Even so, economic development has still often been approached primarily with the conceptual tools of rather narrow economic analysis.

Much of that has now changed, and even non-Marxist economists are increasingly turning their attention to the economic implications of social and legal structures, the distribution of power and adjudication of property rights, and the determinants of innovation. *How the West Grew Rich* is an example of this most recent of the reiterated attempts to grasp

ple with the "institutional" implications of national wealth and poverty.

As with much of the new institutional economics, Nathan Rosenberg and L. E. Birdzell are primarily concerned with "institutions" broadly defined: social structures and relationships as well as systems of law and formal organizations. These, they argue, have been the essential determinants of the ability to innovate and change, and of the degree of investment and enterprise. Economic growth in the West was, on this view, the outcome of behavioural responses to the diffusion of authority and decision-making, the diversity of economic units, the market encouragement and reward of risk-taking and the punishment of failure, and the protection of property rights.

Put as baldly as this, the message has an ideologically familiar ring. It is, therefore, only fair to add that it is here embedded in a detailed survey of economic history since the Middle Ages. Certainly, the authors show the ways in which change and risk-taking could have been stimulated by the transmutation of authority, the legal protection of individual property rights and commercial transactions, and the social tolerance and incorporation of technical and organizational innovation. More than this, they are also able to come to conceptual grips with such recent and unexpected developments in Western economies as the dramatic decline in the relative importance of industry.

The logic of this thesis is persuasive and interesting enough. The problem is, however, that in spite of its presentation primarily in historical terms it remains largely an exercise in deduction. For even the empirical material is marshalled around a skein of theoretical constructs, or, rather, of constructs (such as the pervasive importance of "innovations in trade, technology, and organization") with characteristics such as "uncertainty, search, exploration,

financial risk, experiment and discovery" which are so protean as to afford very little practical and informative historical purchase.

Of course, the fact that a model of social behaviour is difficult to make fully operational is no reason to discard it in favour of inadequate statistical or formally precise explanations. But it is a reason to remind ourselves of how little we understand of the essential dynamics of economic development (and retrogression). The school of economic thought represented by *How the West Grew Rich* does well to focus attention on the social context of economic action; but its explanations are as yet no more than suggestive. There is, alas, still too much of the tautological in the arguments, too many arbitrary lists of critical elements in the social and legal fabric.

In spite of the significance of the hypothesis and the wealth of supporting detail, what is lacking is a sensitivity to the differences in the patterns of Western growth. By comparison with their medieval past, all Western nations have become rich. But a model which purports to explain that long trend ought to be capable of explaining substantial gradations in economic achievement, and the role of apparently divergent social and cultural institutions. Why Britain has grown less rich than the United States or Japan; how Japan has managed to grow rich from an apparently different institutional context; why rates of growth vary markedly for the same society in different periods – these are questions which must be answered by any persuasive theory of growth. Institutional economics reminds us of the importance of the context of and incentives to decision-making; it even identifies what are likely to have been some of the critical determinants of growth; but it is still a long way from explaining why some societies grow richer than others.

A wreath ill laid

Anthony Kenny

GEOFFREY H. HARTMAN (Editor)
Hitler in Moral and Political Perspective
284pp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. \$29.95 (paperback, \$9.95).
0253 20383 X

In the last free elections in pre-war Germany the town of Bitburg voted overwhelmingly against the Nazis. Until last year its name was mainly known for a slogan advertising a lager ("Bitte ein Bit"). Since May 1985 its name has been a symbol for the memory of Germany's Nazi past.

President Reagan planned a visit to Germany in the month which marked the fortieth anniversary of the surrender of the German armies in the Second World War. Chancellor Kohl urged him to visit a German military cemetery as a gesture of reconciliation, and also suggested a visit to the site of a concentration camp such as Dachau. The President was reluctant to visit a concentration camp; he did not wish, he said, to take advantage of the visit to European Germans' feeling of guilt about what their nation did. Instead, he would lay a wreath at the German military cemetery at Bitburg "in a spirit of reconciliation, in a spirit of forty years of peace".

Jewish organizations in the United States at once protested. Protests mounted when it was discovered that the Bitburg cemetery contained the graves of forty-nine SS men. Fifty-three senators petitioned the President to cancel his visit. Elie Wiesel, a Jewish Holocaust survivor, receiving a Congressional Gold Medal of Achievement in the White House, urged cancellation with the words "That place, Mr President, is not your place. Your place is with the victims of the SS."

In spite of votes by eight-five Senators and 390 congressmen urging him to reconsider, the President, accompanied by Chancellor Kohl, did lay a wreath at Bitburg on May 5, 1985, having immediately previously visited the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen.

Geoffrey Hartman's book is a collection of documents, records, essays, photographs and cartoons concerning the President's visit to Bitburg and the events which led up to it and followed from it. It is a book to dip into rather than to read from end to end: inevitably, the same points are made many times, and the level of discussion is very uneven. The style is highly varied, ranging from a solemn political tract on "Defusing the Past" by Jürgen Habermas to a parody of Hamlet by Miles Kline ("Alas, poor Ronald, I knew him well"). The speeches of the protagonists provide a text on which to hang reflections on a number of moral and political themes: the influence of the past on the present, the relation between national history and personal responsibility, the conflict between retribution and reconciliation.

At the most superficial level the record provides an illuminating record of a Presidential public relations exercise which went badly wrong. Desiring to appear magnanimous, independent, and strong-minded, the President, resisting calls for reconsideration from many of his friends, appeared insensitive, stubborn and a dupe of the German Chancellor. The transcripts of his public defences of his decision reveal a succession of obviously false innuendoes. "None of them [the German people] who were adults and participated in any way" in the war, he said, are still alive; "very few . . . even remember the war". "There is nothing wrong with visiting that cemetery where those young men are victims of Nazism also. . . . They were

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McGREGOR CHAIR IN ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Beginning in the academic year 1987-88, Oakland University will annually appoint a distinguished scholar, visual artist or performing artist to the McGregor Chair in Arts and Humanities. The person appointed is expected to contribute to the intellectual life of the university by encouraging imaginative, thought-provoking discussion among students and faculty in the arts and humanities. In addition, the new McGregor professor will be expected to teach one course each of the two semesters – one in the Honors College, the other in an appropriate department – and to present a series of lectures to the university community. The candidate should have achieved international recognition in the humanities or the creative arts and be an articulate, stimulating and supportive teacher.

Nominations, letters of inquiry and applications may be sent to Professor Brian Murphy, Director, Honors College, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan 48063. Nominations should be received by October 1, 1986. Completed applications, due November 1, 1986, should include a letter of introduction, curriculum vitae and three letters of recommendation.

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John Coyle

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

"There is no doubt about it," wrote Gertrude Stein in *Everybody's Autobiography*:

In the twentieth century if you are to come to be writing really writing you cannot make a living at it not by writing. It was done in the nineteenth century but not in the eighteenth or twentieth not possibly. And that is very curious, not so curious really but still very curious. In the eighteenth century not enough read to make anyone earn their living and in the twentieth century too many read for any one to make their living by writing.

It may be that she spoke more truth than she knew, though now the mass market often finances only the blockbuster and the formula rather than "the writer" as the nineteenth century imagined him. Contrary to the much-cherished and much-envied image of the necton, the gargantuan advance and the film deal, most American scribes lead rather straitened lives. Their condition is the subject of a very interesting new study, *The Wages of Writing*, by Paul Williams Kingston and Jonathan R. Cole (Columbia University Press, \$29.50). Robert Benchley's remark that self-employed writers were paid "per word, per piece or perhaps" is the subtitle of their book.

Basing themselves on a working definition of "writer" that includes all contemporary Americans who have published at least one book, the authors found that while 5 per cent of this category earned more than \$80,000 in 1979, the median was \$4,775. Other findings might have been predicted more readily – the rate of fluctuation in earnings is very noticeable, for instance, with 5 per cent making ten times as much as they did in the preceding year, while another 5 per cent pulled down one fifth as much. As a result, it's not startling to find that half of all authors either take non-writing jobs, or have spouses who work. But, in a heart-warming tribute to "the itch", 46 per cent of part-time writers expressed a willingness to drop their other work if they thought they could match the lost income by authorship.

Unexpected findings include the fact that black, Asian and Hispanic authors did not report significantly different incomes from their craft, while the gap between male and female authors was noticeable in all brackets. Social class made almost no difference: nor did college education or the relative prestige of the college. The way to make money, it seems, is from "genre fiction", one fifth of whose practitioners earned at least \$50,000 in 1979. Vaguely to my relief, I learned from this survey that awards do not make much difference to income.

Taking Stein at her word, Kingston and Cole investigate the evolution of writing as an American profession and find that it has lagged about a century behind that of England. In his book *The Profession of Authorship in Amer-*

ica, William Charvat counts from the 1820s, when James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving found a consistent public for themselves. But Melville made \$8,000 from the English and American sales of his first six books (including *Moby Dick*). This was about \$1,600 (per annum, as Benchley might have said) for five years. No wonder the lure of the Custom House seemed so strong, though as Hawthorne reminded us, speaking of his colleagues in that eleemosynary institution:

None of them, I presume, had ever read a page of my fiction, or would have cared a fig the more for me, if they had read them all; nor would it have mended the matter, in the least, had those same unprofitable pages been written with a pen like that of Burns or Chaucer, each of whom was a Custom-House officer in his day, as well as I.

This month sees the 350th anniversary of Harvard University, and the air is full of justified pride and sentiment about the continuity of an institution which used to subsist in part on the revenue of a London tavern. Harvard has survived into the present age of gigantism because it has generous alumni, and can compete in the hectic race with grants and endowments. A forthcoming book will detail one of the university's most grandiose projects – one that never came to pass.

The book is the posthumous memoir of Keyes D. Metcalf, former Harvard librarian, who died in 1984. In September 1945, he was summoned to the office of James B. Conant, President of Harvard, and asked to ponder the following thought:

It has seemed to me that, in the world's present situation, it might be advisable to select the printed material that would preserve the record of our civilisation for the one we can hope will follow, micro-filming it and making perhaps 10 copies, and burying these in 10 different places throughout the country.

Conant, who was President of Harvard between 1933 and 1953, was a chemist by profession and had been closely involved in the Manhattan project. In this capacity, he had witnessed the explosion of the first atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945. Though he favoured the use of the weaponry against the Japanese, he feared the spread of the technology and wanted to avoid a repetition of the erasure of knowledge that followed the fall of Rome. Metcalf duly reported that "to preserve the material on which our present civilisation is based" would necessitate the micro-filming of 500,000 volumes. A tenfold replication, for burial or otherwise, would come at roughly 2.5 billion pages. "This would include" he minutely "the great literature of all countries that should not be lost, such as everything written by Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Dante and Goethe." He added drily that "there would be no need to preserve more than a few of the thousands of volumes written about

these writers and their works." Metcalf also made provision for music, fine arts, history, philosophy, economics, sociology and "perhaps especially important, our scientific developments in the broadest sense of that term". His memoirs, edited by Edwin Newman, do not state whether this last would have included various breakthroughs in nuclear physics.

Metcalf believed that the scheme was feasible but not desirable. In the first place, he argued, "everyone would be so upset at the idea". In the second, even if nuclear war wiped out major centres of population, "copies of practically all this material" would survive at "Dartmouth, Standard, Iowa State College, Oberlin and other institutions at a distance from large cities." Conant finally abandoned the idea, devoting himself to anti-nuclear warnings from various platforms. One is struck by the two terms of quixotry on display in this memoir: the first believing that Harvard could muster and preserve the sum of human knowledge and the second that thermonuclear annihilation would spare large tracts of the Ivy League.

The hegemony of *Commentary* as the magazine of intellectual American Jewry has been undisputed for decades. Disaffection with its editorial stance and character has been fairly constant also, and every once in a while one has heard rumours of a rival effort – rather as there were mutterings of a "counter *Encounter*" in London throughout the 1960s and 70s. The fact that this discussion invariably centres on the personality and style of Norman Podhoretz is a tribute of a kind to the distinct impress of his editorship. So is the fact that the newest "quality" Jewish publication explicitly defines itself in opposition to, and in competition with, Podhoretz's world view. *Tikkun*, which hopes to make the uneasy transition from a quarterly to a bi-monthly over the next year, has just made its first appearance. Its title, which might translate best as "healing" but which also carries the meaning of "transformation", is the brainchild of its editor, Michael Lerner, who writes in his founding editorial about the imperative of Jewish universalism and says:

All the more unfortunate that in recent decades conservative voices in the Jewish world, claiming to speak for all Jews, have publicly celebrated contemporary America as though it were the embodiment of the Messianic age.

This view, it is fair to say, is the one that supplies *Tikkun*'s energy. But in a straight lift

from the famous ad for Levy's rye bread, the magazine preclaims that "You don't have to be Jewish to subscribe to the liberal alternative *Commentary*." The editorial board made from Norman Birnbaum to A.B. Yehoshua, Robert Heilbroner to Elie Wiesel, is an extraordinary size (almost fifty names are listed) and also gives the slight impression of a lack of confidence; an impression which is reinforced in some of the articles and in the publication of a something-for-everyone symposium, *Silkin*, on polycentrism. *Tikkun* can be had from 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, California 94612.

The East Coast jet-borne literati have been in convulsions of anticipation for some time at the prospect of Mike Nichols's film version of Norman Ephron's *Heavenly Creatures*, a lightly fictionalized account of the break-up of her marriage to Carl Bernstein (who has already been portrayed by Dustin Hoffman in *All the President's Men*). The result, with Jack Nicholson playing the part of a faithless Bernstein and Meryl Streep portraying the wronged Ephron, is as predictable a disappointment as could have been wished. Many critics have wondered at the banality of the movie and contrasted it with the sassy vigour of Ephron's novel of the same name. Some have wondered aloud if the movie of *The Graduate* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* has lost his directional nerve. Such critics utterly fail to grasp the power of litigation in the United States. A document, filed in the Washington D.C. Superior Court last year, bears Ephron's signature and forms part of her separation agreement with Carl Bernstein. It reads, in part:

The Book and the script which I have written based upon the Book are fiction. However, some of the events described in the Book are based loosely upon certain events that occurred in the lives of my husband, myself, and our children. Others are totally my own invention and have no basis in fact. They include any and all scenes in the Book from which any inference might be drawn that Carl has ever been less than a caring, loving, and conscientious father. Any such inference would be contrary to the fact. The character of the father in the movie *Heavenly Creatures* will be portrayed at all times as a caring, loving and conscientious father in any screenplay prepared or executed with my name attached to it.

There follows a great deal of material about the privacy of the children – a privacy which I do not violate by repeating. But you can see how this kind of thing puts a crimp in a director's style . . . I try very hard to avoid this catchphrase, but in the present case there's no alternative. Only in America.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Lord Annan was Chairman of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting from 1974 to 1977. Mary Beard is a Fellow of Newnham College, Cambridge. Richard Bradley is the author of *The Social Foundations of Prehistoric Britain*, 1984. C. P. Beard is the author of *Torquato Tasso: A study of the poet and of his contribution to English literature*, 1965.

Paul Cartledge is co-editor, with F. D. Harvey, of *Cruz: Essays in Greek history presented to G.E.M. de Ste Croix on his 75th birthday*, 1985.

Christopher Chippindale is Editor-designate of *Antiquity*. Michael Crawford is Professor of Ancient History at University College London. He is the author of *Roman Republican Coinage*, 1975, and editor of *Sources for Ancient History*, 1984.

Glyn Daniel is Emeritus Disney Professor of Archaeology at the University of Cambridge. His autobiography, *Some Small Harvests*, is published this month.

P. N. Furbank is working on a study of Daniel Defoe and bibliography of his writings. James Graham-Campbell is Reader in Medieval Archaeology at University College London.

H. Stuart Hughes is Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego. His most recent book is *Prisoners of Hope: The silver age of the Italian Jews 1942-1947*, 1983.

John Keep is Professor of Russian History at the University of Toronto and the author of *The Russian Revolution: A study in mass mobilization*, 1976.

Anthony Kenny is Master of Balliol College, Oxford. His books include *The Ivory Tower: Essays in philosophy and public policy* and *The Logic of Detention*, which were both published last year.

P. R. S. Moorey is Keeper of the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Dervin Murphy's books include *Muddling Through in Malagasy*, published last year.

P. K. O'Brien is Reader in Economic History and Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He is the editor of *Railways and the Economic Development of Western Europe 1830-1914*, 1983.

John Orr's *Tragic Drama and Modern Society* was published in 1982.

Stewart Piggott is an Honorary Fellow of St John's College, Oxford. His *William Shakespeare: An eighteenth-century antiquary* was published in an enlarged and revised edition last year.

St. Steven Kundman's books include *The First Bulgarian Empire*, 1930. His most recent book is *Magna*, 1980.

Prue Shaw is a lecturer in Italian at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London. Andrew Sherratt is Assistant Keeper in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and Editor of the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, 1980.

Randall Stevenson is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Edinburgh.

Barry Supple is Professor of Economic History at the University of Cambridge. He is the editor of *The Experience of Economic Growth*.

Helene Samuels has recently completed a study of British attitudes to Russia from the 1880s to the 1920s. Michael Vickers is an Assistant Keeper in the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. His book, written with James Allen and Oliver Impey, *From Silver to Ceramic*, was published recently.

C. F. Wickham is a lecturer in Medieval History at the University of Birmingham.

J. J. Wilkes is Professor of Archaeology of the Roman Provinces at the University of London. Zinoviy Zinich's novel, *Russkaya Sibir*, 1983, has been broadcast in an English adaptation by BBC Radio 4.

Letters

British Library Lending Services

Sir, – I am sorry that Sir Geoffrey Elton (Letters, August 29) thinks that the British Library Board are philistines because we are prepared to lend a small percentage of our reference stock. Our aim is to give the best possible services out of our combined collections to scholars and other readers whether they are visitors to our reading rooms or distant users. Tight budgets compel us to look carefully at such things as buying additional copies of books and other materials; by reducing duplication we aim to maintain as far as possible a greater range of acquisitions.

Even so there is no foundation in the suggestion that we propose to lend from all our reference stock. Many categories are excluded from such plans, including material acquired under copyright deposit (whether British, Imperial or Colonial); material that is historically valuable, rare or precious; material that is in high demand in the reading rooms; and manuscripts. Furthermore, we shall be lending only the most recent publications.

The principle of lending is not new. We already have a policy of selective lending from the collections of the India Office Library and Records and the Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books, and this has not given rise to any problems. We now propose to extend this principle to low-use foreign language books, but again it will be on a "last resort" basis after all other back-up sources have been tried. Each request will be treated on its merits and there will be a requirement on any loan that it shall not be for home use but for reference use at the reader's library.

Similarly, we are examining ways of reducing the duplication of periodicals by supplying photocopies from London rather than Yorkshire. If we do decide to lend it will be after careful scrutiny and again only as a last resort. I believe this should relieve Sir Geoffrey of his anxieties and put our proposals into a proper perspective.

QUINTON,
British Library, 2 Sheraton Street, London W1.

Cultural Property

Sir, – As one of the two literary executors charged with the care of the Owen literary estate, I share the responsibilities with Jon Stallworthy. Like him, I have been both editor (of *Wilfred Owen's Collected Letters*) and publisher, and it follows that we are both very conscious of copyright matters. Perhaps, therefore, I may add comments to the correspondence arising from Jon Silkin's article, for it seems to me that Mr Silkin has rather played down the central reason for the withdrawal of his edition in order to play up his dislike of the copyright laws.

His edition, *Wilfred Owen: The Poems* (Penguin, 1985), was withdrawn from sale because his publisher was notified, and accepted, that there had been a serious breach of copyright. Mr Silkin writes (Letters, August 29): "Yes, I was under the misapprehension that fifty years after the author's death was the extent of copyright limitation." This candid admission is welcome and explains much of the confusion that followed; but his edition carries no acknowledgment for permission to reprint (Stallworthy's point) five-and-a-half pages from *Stegfried's Journey*, though Sassoon died only nineteen years ago. Silkin is silent on this point, as he is about the copyright illustration material he also borrowed.

"Yes, through ignorance I infringed, to the case of a few poems and variants . . .", Silkin concedes, and buries too to the counter-attack, brushing aside the fact that the infringements were substantial enough to have convinced his publisher that the edition should be withdrawn.

All publishers maintain lists of their charges for permission to reprint copyright material: a standard fee, a reduced fee, or no fee at all will be fixed against each item. In most cases authors and literary executors are content to leave these permissions to their publishers, and Chatto and Windus have handled the Owen permissions since they published the original posthumous volume in December 1920.

Owen's poems are in three groups on these lists. First, Blunden's texts of 1931. These went out of copyright in 1981, and anyone may reprint them. Silkin says that Stallworthy implies that he must be consulted. This is nonsense, and has at no time been stated or implied. Next, there are the copyright poems substantially amended or first printed by Day Lewis and/or Stallworthy, of which "Has your soul slipped" and "The Wrestlers" are examples. Blunden and Day Lewis each printed eighteen and fourteen lines respectively; they are expanded in *The Complete Poems and Fragments* to forty-six and ninety-eight lines respectively (the latter being a conflation of the poem's two latest versions). Chatto – any publisher – would reasonably seek the standard fee for the additional twenty-eight and eighty-four lines. The third category is of non-copyright poems into which less substantial variants have been introduced. Here, permission charges would either be proportionately reduced or, where only a word or two or points of punctuation were involved, waived altogether. In the latter cases, not all editors or anthologists would seek formal approval – though in my thirty-four years' experience most are scrupulous in clearing these matters.

Against this background of common procedure it seems worth stressing two points that may have been overlooked: that *The Complete Poems and Fragments* of 1983 made available more than twice the number of poems and fragments previously in print; and that neither Owen's publishers nor his executors knew anything of Silkin's edition until rumour and then public announcement demonstrated that it was forthcoming, to be published – as it was – within a few months of the Chatto paperback. Nor was anything heard from the British Library. (Indeed, I cannot understand why, as Silkin says, they were approached on the question of photographs by Penguin. Penguin to Chatto would have been the normal course.)

To me, and I do not know Mr Silkin, there is no "wicked socialist" here. There is a cavalier. I can think of no other word to describe the blitheness of his approach to copyright when he says, for example, annotating the text of "The Wrestlers": "Stallworthy has reconstructed the work and I reproduce that." One last point. When Penguin finally offered a share in the royalties to Chatto and the Owen Estate, we had no hesitation in declining. We felt – I think reasonably, in the circumstances – that to accept would have been rather like surprising an intruder making off with the silver and then obligingly agreeing to let him buy it, at his own evaluation.

JOHN BELL,
West End Cottage, Wootton, Woodstock, Oxford.

Sir, – The story of the Ethiopian *Kwerata Res'u* ("plereing of his [Christ's] head") painting, to which Stephen Bell refers (Letters, August 29), is, of course, well known. It has been described in considerable detail by such masters of the subject as Enrico Cerulli, Stanislaw Chojnacki, Richard Pankhurst, and others. It has generally been held to be "undoubtedly of foreign inspiration and execution" (Cerulli, Chojnacki), that is, Flemish or Portuguese. Richard Pankhurst has identified (*Abba Salamm*, 10, 1979) its present owner in Portugal. Pankhurst has also established that Miss Scott-Elliott of the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, had hoped (in 1961) that the picture would find its way back to Ethiopia; and that the present Portuguese owner had proposed, apparently unsuccessfully, to the then Portuguese Government to present the picture to Emperor Haile Selassie in the course of a state visit to Lisbon.

EDWARD ULLENDORFF,
4 Bladon Close, Oxford.

J. M. Keynes's professional and non-professional papers have now been combined in a single archive at King's College Library, Cambridge. In order to facilitate conservation and cataloguing the archive must be closed for a period. Scholars needing to consult a few files only may, however, reserve a seat in the King's Archive Centre during the months of September and November (but not October), and the first two weeks of December, by writing to the Librarian, Dr M. A. Hills, from whom information about future access to the papers may also be obtained.

'Semites and Anti-Semites'

Sir, – Ernest Gellner's review (August 22) of Bernard Lewis's *Semites and Anti-Semites* was, on the whole, admirably judicious, but should the playfulness which led him to assert that the Holocaust was "disinterested" pass without comment? If institutionalized massmurders are net, at the managerial level, determined by appetite or malice, there is merely a shortage of administrators or executioners to take the opportunity for pillage, sadism or blackmail. Can one then speak, even in an academic sense, of the "disinterested" spoliation of the persecuted? It may be that mere theft and extortion are too negligible to weigh against murder, but then murder too was a matter of something mere, or less, than principle. To pass the word that the Nazis and their henchpersons were, even in a weakened sense, idealists is to do them altogether too much honour.

Etienne de la Beétie's *Discours sur la servitude volontaire* warned long ago against the tendency to make obedience to tyranny into a virtue. It also involves the complicity of those who like to pass off as a sorry duty what often turns out to be an occasion for sharing in the proceeds. Can anyone seriously deny that systematic opportunism accompanied the "disinterested" war against the Jews? Even professors were known to acquiesce in what offered them unexpected advancement. Dispassionate assessment is one thing; the apparent exoneraton of thieves and murderers is another.

FREDERIC RAPHAEL,
Lagarde, St Laurent-la-Vallée, 24170 Belvez, France.

Jesus' Genealogy

Sir, – Of course Edward Ullendorff (Letters, August 1) is right, up to a point. Ruth is mentioned, as are Rachab and the anonymous lady who "was Uriah's". Where I disagree is where he says Ruth is "crucially" mentioned. Nothing in the text suggests this. It simply says: "And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse". Ruth is no more significant than Rachab, and neither disturbs the unbroken patrilineal chain from Abraham to Christ. I don't think it is useful to make too much of those three ladies in a genealogical chain of forty-two generations!

It is also striking to contrast this (occupation-less) male chain with current Orthodox Rabbinical law in Israel where Jews are defined as such only through the maternal line. Today, no one cares who your father was; three thousand years ago no one cared who was your mother. *C'est curieux, n'est-ce pas?*

BENEDICT ANDERSON,
Indemata, Cornell University, 102 West Avenue, Ithaca, New York 14850.

Carlos Fuentes

Sir, – Like Tom Good (Letters, August 8), I was quite surprised at Séan French's comment in the July 4 issue that Carlos Fuentes's novel *Where the Air Is Clear* is now available in English for the first time. Not only was the book available through the Noonday Press division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1971, as Good states, but it was actually published for the first time eleven years earlier, in 1960, by the small New York publishing house of Ivan Obolensky. Sam Filsman's translation has therefore been available, or at least in existence, for twenty-six years now. In other words, only two years less than the original 1958 Spanish-language edition of *La región más transparente*.

WILLIAM RIGGAN,
World Literature Today, 630 Parrington Oval, Norman, Oklahoma 73019.

Terrorism

Sir, – If I may parody Horrogon – Terror doth never prosper – that's no error, for if it prosper none dare call it terror.

CHRISTOPHER FYFE,
2 St Mary's Street, Edinburgh.

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AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 294

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office no later than October 3. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 294" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on October 10.

1 "Sesquipedalian" he would say. "Sesquipedalian verbiage." "Eh?" said Phil. "Eloquent Rapscallops."

2 I am sorry to find you participating in the vulgar error of the reading public, to whom an unusual collection of words, involving a juxtaposition of superlatives, immediately suggests the notion of hyperbolsophical paradoxology.

3 Z – indicated the large plastic disc dangling from his lapel, which had his name printed inside a circular inscription "Vilth International Congress of Literary Somnolence". On the other lapel was a bright enamel button which declared, "Every Decoding is Another Encoding".

Competition No 290
Winner: Hazel Miller

Answers:
1 I saw my Meg come, linked o'er the ley;

I saw my Meg, but Meggy na saw me:
For yet the sun was wading thro' the mist,
And she was close upon me ere she wist;
Her coats were kilts, and did sweetly shaw
Her straight bare legs that whiter were than snow;
Her cockenry anooded up, low sleek,
Her haffet-locks hang waving on her cheek;
Her cheek sae ruddy, and her een sae clear;
And O! Her mouth's like ony hiny pear.

Alan Ramsey, *The Gentle Shepherd*, Act 1.

2 Meg grabbed her hat and set out for Windmill, the Cowgate slowly unreeching its flag, up In Royal Mile the lories were lollaping over the eulays, Paddy Parish flitting its doors with weans; snuffly and ragged, kids off to school, scrawling dirty things on the pavement, some throwing flint and cheeking a lassie . . . She'd get out of this place, get a lodging somewhere In Tangleha' or the Eclogues.

Lewis Grassie-Obbion, *Grey Granite*.

3 Meg, in the meanwhile, went to a great black cauldron that was bulging on a fire on the floor, and lifting the lid, an odour was diffused through the vault, which, if the vapours of a witch's cauldron could in might be trusted, promised better things than the hell-broth which such vessels are usually supposed to contain. It was in fact the savour of a goodly stew, composed of fowl, buns, partridges and moorquaint, boiled In a large mess with potatoes, colons, leeks, and from the ale of the cauldron appeared to be prepared for half-a-dozen people at least. "So ye hae our something a day?" said Meg, heaving a large portion of this mess into a brown dish, and stewing it sedulously with salt and pepper.

Walter Scott, *Quy Manierings*, Chapter 46.

COMMENTARY

Adapting to circumstances

Randall Stevenson
on the Edinburgh Fringe

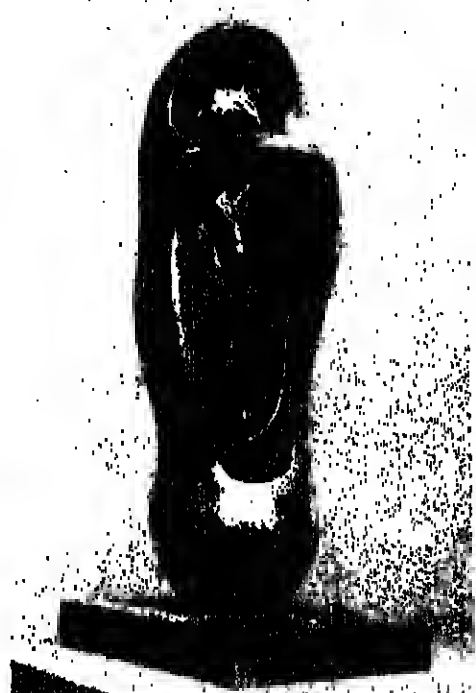
The highlight of this year's excellent Official Festival drama was *Crime and Punishment*, performed by Andrzej Wajda's Teatr Stary, which first dazzled the Fringe three years ago, in another adaptation of Dostoevsky at the Traverse. Since then, the Fringe has welcomed a number of companies whose diverse styles have further illustrated the richness of contemporary Polish theatre.

This year, Teatr Provisorium's *Heritage* offered some sharp contrasts with Wajda's work, in both subject and style. Rather like Teatr Osmego Dnia, which excited Edinburgh audiences last year, Provisorium are a small company, firmly committed to political views, though scarcely explicit in their treatment of them. In *Heritage*, they juxtaposed mixed exhaustion and hope at the end of the Second World War with scenes of humiliation during the recent period of martial law, leaving the audience to deduce for themselves the betrayals, the "defeat amongst the Refuse of the Historical Process", which have intervened between 1945 and the present. Such deductions were stimulated but complicated by Provisorium's oblique, symbolic presentation. While Wajda's *Crime and Punishment* remained generally on a heightened edge of naturalism, Provisorium shared more fully in the abstract, highly stylized manner of much recent Polish Theatre, communicating mostly wordlessly, through suggestive images—ancestral portraits brooding over drunken soldiery; moments of remembered happiness unfolding to the music of an accordion; love in the shape of an empty woman's coat visiting men trapped by martial law. The complete physical command of the three actors was integral to the evocative power of this staging. Their precise, often violent movements communicated throughout a sense of danger, even threat, which secured the audience's absolute attention even at more cryptic moments.

The Official Festival not only appropriated previous resources of the Fringe, such as Teatr Stary, but even took over some of the Fringe's habitual roles. Extravagantly avant-garde in style, the Wooster Group's *The Road to Immortality (Part Two)*, for example, seemed a better candidate for Fringe than officialdom. Ironically, while many of the Wooster Group's brilliant dreams and deconstructions were based on a bizarre pastiche of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, one of the triumphs of the Fringe itself was a production of Miller's *Phylogia for Time* which relied quite simply and straightforwardly on particular strengths of Miller's dramatization. Originally a screenplay for a television film which starred Vanessa Redgrave, *Phylogia for Time* finds in the story of the women's concentration-camp orchestra an imaginable context through which to communicate something of the almost limitless, unimaginable suffering of the Holocaust. Studio Theatre's meticulous development of the women's individual lives and relationships established a firm emotional focus for the vast horrors which surrounded them. Though this was a triumph of restrained ensemble playing, Deborah Jean Templin was outstanding as Fania Felenon, the orchestra's star. Fania's insistence on the natural, prosaic qualities of the camp commandant's contribution to another strength of Miller's work: its avoidance of any clichéd, evasive representation of the Nazis as monsters of another species. By making the commandant's love of music, and of children, entirely plausible as well as paradoxical, Studio Theatre's performance accentuated this view of the crimes of the Holocaust as an unavoidable challenge to humanity's whole view of itself. Confronting the audience with this challenge, as well as the suffering communicated by shorn, ragged actresses, Studio Theatre's production was always powerful and at times almost unbearably moving.

Peter Granger-Taylor's new play for the Shadow Syndicate, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, was also set in Hitler's Germany, portraying Jewish fugitives rescued by

an American singer but eventually sent back to likely death by United States immigration. Unlike Studio Theatre, who mined their orchestral music to a soundtrack, a feature of the Shadow Syndicate's production was the live performance of original songs, cleverly imitating the style of 1930s Jazz, admired by Jew and S.S. alike. These bright musical interludes actually deepened the poignancy of characters' lives, establishing for them a vitality thrown into extreme relief by the certain darkness of their futures. The music also contributed more simply to the entertainment and pace of a production which in an hour and a half sketched scores of brief scenes—sometimes atmospheric and inconsequential; sometimes played simul-



"Working model for Upright External Form", bronze, 1951, by Henry Moore who died on September 7. It is reproduced from the third revised edition of volume two of the complete catalogue of Moore's sculpture, Henry Moore: Sculpture 1949-54, edited by Alan Bowness, which has recently been reissued (132pp with 152 black-and-white plates, Lund Humphries, £25.05/33.14/49.24).

taneously on different levels of the set; or in instant, filmic succession. Only occasionally letting pace or tension drop, the Shadow Syndicate's performers moved with ease from action to song, and often beyond naturalistic style. A similar expertise characterized their other show, *Blood of Angels*, a reworking of Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* as bizarre as the Wooster Group's re-examination of *The Crucible*. Supposedly performed by a 1950s American encounter group, as a means of analysing a disolute Jokanaan-figuro, Wilde's text grew into a sort of unsettlingly extended metaphor, a play-within-the-play context for the exfoliation of psychological obsession and disturbance. Though the result was at times thoroughly puzzling, the facility with which the company alternated actuality and dream, New World and Old Testament, made *Blood of Angels* thrilling to watch—a Wilde night further enhanced by an excellent soundtrack and extravagant special effects. Equipped with talented performers, the organizational acumen to run three venues, and even a computerized ticket system, Shadow Syndicate showed themselves one of the most formidable experimental groups on the Fringe.

Richard Crane and Fayna Williams have an equally strong Edinburgh reputation, partly based on their production of *The Brothers Karamazov* some years ago. This year, rather less successfully, they explored a later phase of Russian fiction, Yuri Olesha's *Envy* (1927). Olesha adapted his own novel for the stage as *The Conspiracy of Feeling*, a potentially exciting vehicle for constructivist or other imaginative staging. Crane and Williams's production for Essex University Theatre concentrated on this aspect of the original, employing a stylized, athletic form of performance described in their programme as freely evolved from Eisenstein's "theory of Acrobatic Theatre". This style was appropriate to the venue, a school gymnasium, and to some of the strange, ex-

perimental quality of Olesha's novel, but it frequently left too obscure or abstract his real questions about how old values encounter the modern mass stage. Despite performers equally adept in acrobatics and machine-age caricature, *Envy* had too little clear significance or narrative continuity to sustain the audience through a longish evening.

A more engaging treatment of early twentieth-century experiment appeared in Cambridge Cuos's production of *Les Femelles de Tiresias* (1917) in Poulenc's later operatic version. Apollinaire's "drame surréaliste" seems particularly appropriate for contemporary revival. Thérèse's absolute rejection of the role of women—ultimately made anatomical by the transformation of her breasts into departing balloons—can be construed as a feminist fable. Cuos's production was ingeniously faithful to the spirit of the original, the Prologue-singer remaining onstage as a sort of marionette-master, manipulating the actors into grotesque movements as far as possible from the naturalistic style, the "art calomnieux et délétère" which Apollinaire rejected. The company's principal strengths, however, were straightforward ones—excellent singing, with Helen Fehily especially powerful as Thérèse, and a collective enthusiasm which created in an good measure as anywhere on the Fringe the qualities of "joie, volupté, vertu" which Apollinaire sought for the theatre.

Olesha's *Envy* was one of several ambitious adaptations on this year's Fringe, even including, in response to the Festival's Enlightenment theme, Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* translated into an elegant soirée of claret and debate, *Conversations of Mr Hume's*. Elsewhere, the many adaptations of fiction demonstrated a wide range of possibilities and pitfalls associated with transferring novels to the stage. Bristol Revolutions' *Under Western Eyes*, for example, illustrated some of the difficulties caused by the theatre's breifer claim on its audience's attention, and by its lack of the novel's facility for examining inner consciousness. Their production seemed at times only a hasty trot through the plot, with time for no more than superficial development of character. Though in some ways this made Razumov even more distant and enigmatic than in the original, neither this accidental interest nor some good individual performances were enough to dispel a feeling of perfunctoriness about the whole.

Full of dialogue, and of descriptions of manners and appearances, Dickens's fiction is perhaps unusually exempt from too hazards attendant upon staging novels. The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama certainly made it seem so, following up an award-winning *Great Expectations* on the Fringe of 1979 with an equally engaging *David Copperfield* this year. The success of the production depended heavily on the enthusiasm of a young cast in doubling and trebling characters, though this was obviously made easier by the quickly-recognized mannerisms Dickens provides to distinguish each. The task was also assisted by the Brechtian device of having the cast preface each of the parts they played with a brief description in the third person, sometimes complete with speech cues. This contributed to some great moments of humour and poignancy, especially in the first half, when in an excellent ensemble Emma Currie was particularly adept at communicating Davy's Daisy Innocence. After the interval, the company shared some of the problems encountered by Bristol Revolutions in reducing the mass of a novel to an intelligible format and manageable playing time.

One of the most unusual, and successful, of the Fringe's adaptations was not of fiction at all, but of a long poem, Patrick Kavanagh's *The Great Hunger*. In recreating Kavanagh's images of desolatory life in rural Ireland, the Abbey Theatre developed an innovative, imaginative style which realized much of the spirit of the poem without retaining many of its words, or indeed using words very much at all. The company's principally visual communication, begun with its furrowed, potato-strewn set, dominated by a huge idol representative of the central figure's obsessions with the mother of God, the earth mother, above all, his own

mother. His feelings and frustrations, and those of his community, were further developed in a series of symbolic or obscure stage rituals not unlike those of Provisorium and Polish Theatre. These often involved furious physical activity and even occasional outbursts of speech, but there were also extended periods of silence and stasis which encouraged the audience's attention to wander. Generally, however, *The Great Hunger* sustained the compelling impression of communicating directly from the collective unconscious of a poor rural community, one whose life is ground to nothing by the stony austerity of its land and religion. Some of the best scenes were those which illustrated most clearly this relation between "Religion, the fields, and the fear of the Lord"—for example, when spring's branch-waving, singing joy was instantly chilled into drab conformity by the mere appearance of a priest.

In a year of so many adaptations—*Tristram Shandy*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *The Abbeys of Crewe*, and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (in two separate productions)—were also presented—it was appropriate that one of the most interesting new plays was by a novelist, and much concerned with the nature and validity of literary forms. Mario Vargas Llosa showed himself preoccupied, like so many contemporary South American writers, with the relation of life, narrative and fantasy: his play *Kathie and the Hippopotamus* immediately introduced such concerns in an amusing opening scene showing Kathie employing a writer, Santiago, to convert the prosaic account of her travels, word by word, into a wildly romantic tale of adventure. Thereafter, the play enacts their proliferating fantasies—subtle art dramatic improvements on their rather tawdry lives; issues of imagination and memory which eventually so cocoon reality as to make it almost invisible. Its gradual disappearance was especially well communicated by Robert Swann as Santiago, moving easily between multiple levels of narrative. The production benefited similarly from a beautiful set—a plausible domestic interior encroached upon around its periphery by colonies of palm trees and pyramids, emblematic of the erosion of actuality by the urgencies of dream. Richly imaginative in examining some of the mechanics of imagination, *Kathie and the Hippopotamus* was an outstanding item in another excellent season of new work presented by the Traverse Theatre.

Nrvious anniversaries in 1986 provided a focus for Fringe interest. Commemorating Lorca's death fifty years ago, York Theatre Company's premiere of an unfinished Lorca piece, *Comedy Without Title* contains some Pirandellian contrasts of art and life, and perhaps most resembles Günter Grass's *The Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising* in showing the reaction within a theatre to violently revolutionary events in the streets outside. Though there were some good moments in York's production, it was restricted by the slight, unfinished quality of Lorca's material (only about half an hour's playing time), and further hampered by their decision to extend it by means of a framing action showing Lorca's murder outside Granada. This added little more than some clumsy fascist stamping about in the dark.

Fringe celebrations of Beckett's eightieth birthday were not always more successful. The most impressive Beckett drama on the Fringe, however, was apparently the least ambitious—productions of the short pieces *That Time* and *Catastrophe* by Quiet Theatre which seemed to do little more than follow Beckett's very precise stage directions. *Catastrophe* was nevertheless distinguished both by James Duke's arid verbal malice in the Hamm-like part of the Director, and by the elegant movement of Davina Weil, which even went some way beyond the text in suggesting an element of complicity between Female Assistant and Protagonist. Excellent lighting was also a feature of both plays, creating for the suspended head in *That Time* a mesmerizing, mask-like quality to match the hypnotic recitative of the three voices. Though in most ways as modest as its name, Quiet Theatre's staging admirably illustrated the Fringe's potential for producing good work out of a minimum of resources.

Seeking the sub-text

John Orr

HENRIK IBSEN
John Gabriel Borkman
King's Theatre, Edinburgh
AUGUST STRINDBERG
Miss Julie
King's Theatre, Edinburgh

In Ingmar Bergman's version of *John Gabriel Borkman*, performed by the Bavarian State Theatre, the first act is little more than a prelude. In their sparse, uncluttered receiving room, with no ceiling over which Borkman can pace, the twin sisters Gunhild and Ella, are crabby *Hausfrauen* whose protestations of love for Borkman are arid and saxless, the fantasies of forsaken matriarchs who have never known sensuality. They sit on facing sofas, static and falcon, the only visible movement being Gunhild's neurotic and compulsive knitting. Their futile squabbling over Borkman and Ehart, his son, seems like a parody of out-purce naturalism and does not prepare us for the transformation to come in the second act. Here Bergman presents us with an extraordinary tableau, which fuses perfectly his theatrical and cinematic talents. Borkman's room is dominated by a vast battlefield tapestry. Beneath it, Borkman is stretched out, still and horizontal against the end of the piano as Frida gives her recital. As in a film, Bergman holds the shot for fully five minutes. When he ends it, the pain, fanaticism and resignation of that still gaze are transformed into predatory desire as Borkman reaches out claw-like at the departing Frida.

In his pursuit of a sub-text, Bergman all but dispenses with the central conflicts of the play. The two sisters are already defeated. In revolt, Ehart, the son, never leads but is always led. This is no longer a compassionate Norway arguing over its liberal conscience, but an Imperial Germany with its stark mandates for a Nietzschean will-to-power. Borkman's kingdom is not a utopia betrayed but the empire of

a megalomaniac who refuses to accept obvious defeat. Here the shrunken hollow face of Hans Michael Rehberg seems to have been taken from Munch's "The Cry", a face on the edge of madness yet devoid of guilt and remorse. Instead of dying in resignation Borkman dies through the effort of clutching out at his imaginary kingdom, standing up on the seat in the clearing until the effort of impossible yearning exhausts him.

With its single setting, *Miss Julie*, performed by the Royal Dramatic Theatre from Stockholm, does not suggest the same stark cinematic contrasts. But the design is just as central to the production. The servants' kitchen is bathed in a mellow light which plays on the grey and copper interior. Following Strindberg's original directions, Bergman dispenses with footlights—and spots—and uses exterior backlighting to achieve the effect Strindberg thought might be gained by sidelights. Bergman also dispenses with an interval between the acts and brings the midsummer revelers into the kitchen to drink and carouse while Jenn and Julie are making love in the next room. Julie's explosion of desire is thus a response to a climactic social event. The occasion and the persistence of the midsummer light are almost phantasmagorical, creating the imaginative space of socially unacceptable lust. The scar on Julie's cheek, which Bergman restores from the original draft of the play, is the mark of an arrogant, sexually aggressive woman who in transgressing her social role becomes one of society's victims. As in his production of Ibsen, Bergman goes ruthlessly for the erotic sub-text. Kristin, the servant dressing up and preening herself for midsummer celebrations, is cast as Julie's sexual rival and double, doomed to fail only through lack of status and bad timing.

The performances of Marie Göranzon and Petar Stormare are exemplary. Strindberg's lovers are too shallow and insecure to step out of their roles and create autonomous identities and Bergman's naturalistic transformations highlight perfectly their spiritual shortcomings.

A man of the theatre

Sean French

HAROLD PINTER
Plays and Other Pinter Pieces
Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond

Any disputes about Harold Pinter's standing as a major writer should not obscure how enjoyable he is in his lighter moods: his earlier film screenplays, his television work and the prose pieces that have been assembled for this evening in the theatre.

They are recited by Edward de Souza in a performance of sustained virtuosity that perfectly captures their brittle tone. De Souza assumes for the occasion the garb of a distinguished, middle-aged matloé idol, a slightly faded Elyot Chase: a grey double-breasted suit, a red tie with discreet white spots. The evening's only prop is a battered copy of Wisden in which de Souza refers to cite a couple of recondite cricket statistics.

The first three pieces, "Problem", "The Coast" and "Lola", show the author palely loitering in the footsteps of Samuel Beckett. In the first, an out-of-order telephone creates a mood of comic menace. In the second, two men meet in a seaside town and walk up and down the pier. In the longest of the three (though still lasting little more than five minutes), two men talk and one of them recalls the first time he met a French railway compartment and a beautiful girl in an adjacent train. These are fairly trivial pieces and in a portentous performance would have withered away. But de Souza delivers them with a stylish flourish, reminding us that Pinter's devices—the dry, the deliberate repetition of phrases—owe as much to Noël Coward as to Beckett.

But it is the three final essays which make this evening worth while. They are not fiction and are delivered by de Souza in what I take to be a very convincing imitation of Pinter himself. "Hutton and the Post" is an extraordinary, cricketing

memoir, John Arlott rewritten by Proust, a lyrical catalogue of heroism at the wicket. "He attended to the particular but rarely lost sight of the context in which it took place." This is Pinter's tribute to Hutton himself, who emerges as an enigmatic figure: "every stroke he made surprised me".

The most delightful piece is Pinter's tribute to Arthur Wellard, a celebrated county and international player who finished his cricketing days in Pinter's own team, The Gaieties CC. Pinter is often thought of as a chilly writer, but of cricket and old-style stage actors he writes with immense affection. He describes Wellard and faithfully recounts his old cricketing yarns, but in doing so he turns him into the most Pinteresque of characters:

What about Larwood, Arthur? How fast was he? Larwood? He was a bit quick. Larwood. Outkicks thing I ever saw. First time I faced him was at Trem Bridge, that was my first season with Somerset. Who's this Larwood? I said, supposed to be a bit pacy, is he? I didn't reckon the stories. He's a bit quick, he said. A bit quick? I said. We'll see about that. I faced a few quickies in Kent. Well, I went out there and I got four balls from Larwood and I didn't see any of them. The first I knew about them was Ben Lilly throwing them back. The fifth ball knocked my hob over and I didn't see that one either. I'll tell you, he was a bit quick. Harold Larwood.

The final piece, by some way the longest (in a show that runs under an hour), is "Mac". Pinter's memoir of the actor-manager Alec McCusker. Pinter toured Ireland with his company for two years in the early 1950s. McCusker is a species of actor, wild, raffish, unreliable but occasionally touching greatness, that seems to have died out completely. Pinter's memoir of hard times on the road is funny, slightly sentimental and a reminder of how deeply a man of the theatre he is.

This one-man show is due to be broadcast on television. All the pieces are published in Pinter's *Collected Poems and Prose* recently published by Methuen (232pp, Paperback £3.95, 0 418 60670 8).

COMMENTARY

Suspecting the suspected

Zinovy Zink

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY
Crime and Punishment
St Bride's Centre, Edinburgh

The story of a student with a stricken conscience, who decides to prove to himself that he is a superman by committing a superordinary murder, has long been part of twentieth century mythology. It is the interpretation of the myth that matters, and it is not surprising that a British audience enjoyed the Teatr Stary of Krakow's production of *Crime and Punishment* in Polish in the same way as they would enjoy a classic opera in Italian. Instead of an opera libretto there was inside the theatre programme a synopsis of Andrzej Wajda's adaptation in which Dostoevsky's novel was stripped down to two soap-opera plot lines. The first is Raskolnikov's confrontation with the magistrate's smart investigator Porphyry Petrovich, and the second Raskolnikov's purgatorial relationship with Sonia—precisely those aspects of the novel that led Vladimir Nahokov to dub Dostoevsky as a deft concocter of "sentimental criminals and pious prostitutes". But Wajda's direction succeeds in showing us that it is not for the metaphysical intricacies of his writings that we appreciate Dostoevsky. With his prophecies about a communist Russia now fulfilled, he has regained his initial status as a novelist, and Raskolnikov's idea of mankind as raw material for futuristic experiments ceases to be a subject of controversy among existentialists.

A maze of corridors and innumerable doors, partitions with cuscum windows and conservatory screens with broken glass and peeling paint, built on the stage by Krystyna Zachwatowicz, enigmatically distorts the "geometry" of the stage events and our sense of perspective, perverting our perception of space, time and sound in this seedy St Petersburg. The set stretches time and distance according to the director's whim. The auditorium, of a hundred seats, is smaller than the stage. Sometimes we are locked out and barely hear the dialogue when a door on stage is shut in our faces; sometimes we are allowed to peer in, seeing the face not of the person who is speaking but of the one who reacts most dramatically to the speech. It is for the sake of their external appearances that characters move downstage when their dialogue reaches its peak; the set works like a magnifying glass making them larger than life size. At such moments, our attention is drawn not to the high-flown vocabulary but to the preposterous detail—an unlit cigarette in the mouth of the investigator; who is watching the contorted and stiffened fingers of the hero, while he, in turn, is looking at the deep backstage where a prostitute in her garret is receiving a client who has, in a previous episode, informed the investigator about the murder of an old lady.

Such vertiginous cinematic devices shift the point of view, preventing us from taking sides in confrontations of people and ideas. Wajda has rediscovered here Mikhail Bakhtin's classic study of Dostoevsky, which suggests that the reader's arguments with the author are part of the characters' dialogues; reader and author, accused and prosecutor become interchangeable. In a certain spiritual climate the oppressed and the oppressor desperately need each other to keep the conversation going.

The literal meaning of such a conversation is of secondary importance for Wajda. The way in which the speeches are delivered is dictated not so much by content as by the pace at which the novel is read: when in the book we approach a passage of the utmost significance, our eyes start running wildly along the lines, trying to find out the ending as quickly as possible. It is the outward manifestation by Dostoevsky's characters of the force of ideas that Wajda finds most revealing. Hence, those passages which have been traditionally regarded as profound religious revelations are delivered with apasmodic brahming, spastic gestures and conformed faces, driving both the suspected and the suspecting to the brink of an epileptic fit. With the knowledge that the author was a victim of this very illness, we begin to regard the

epilepsy on stage as something more than a peculiar detail common to every character in this production. It begins to acquire the proportions of metaphor for Dostoevsky's vision, if not for the entire Russian intellectual temperament.

Having simplified the novel by stripping it down to its notoriously "Dostoevskian" passages, and then having reduced the significance of these passages to the way in which they are delivered, Wajda poses a question about the sincerity of Dostoevsky as a novelist in his pronouncements on religion. "Some philosophy to pad it all out" was how Dostoevsky put it on several occasions in his notebooks, as he struggled to shape the fever of unrestrained novelistic conversation into a form of theology acceptable to his readers. For the characters in Wajda's Dostoevsky the subject of conversation is not important, provided it can be wrapped up in an elevated style. Religious and metaphysical paradoxes are used merely as pretexts to confuse an interlocutor and so enable the speaker to strike out in yet another direction in the interminable squabbling. During the intellectual duel between the suspected murderer Raskolnikov and his interrogator, the murdered old lady is of the least importance: it is the other's spiritual soft spots that each is after.

Here lies the reason why Wajda deprives his Raskolnikov of relatives, neighbours, friends and even enemies. The entire social context of the central character disappears, together with all the implications of his crime. This Raskolnikov is entirely on his own; he is the only one responsible. A cruel society cannot be blamed, since society is simply not there. As Lyubimov did before him, Wajda resists the Soviet socialist interpretation of Raskolnikov as "a victim of the oppressive environment". Lyubimov implied that it was this interpretation of the novel that led Russia into revolutionary terror in 1917. The former Soviet director was looking for salvation in religion—hence his stress on the Christian themes of the novel. But Wajda is a citizen of a country where workers kneel in prayer before golog on strike; they do not need Wajda's encouragement to be dissuaded from state atheism. Wajda has chosen ostensibly the most Christian elements from Dostoevsky's novel in order to expose Raskolnikov's proclivity to intellectual epilepsy, a state which might be equally provoked by murder as by religion.

Wajda shows us that not only crime but punishment—that is, suffering—can elevate his character to a blessed state of intellectual rapture; this is Wajda's explanation of the translation of Raskolnikov's state of mind from ferocity to serenity at the end of the novel. Wajda, in this sense, is much more pessimistic than Lyubimov in his exposure of the incurability of criminal obsession caused by sublime ideas; the fascination of such ideas is greatly increased when they are coupled with the political impotence familiar to Russian and Polish intellectuals.

Raskolnikov has a ferocious obsession with truth unmitigated by love. The ideological causes of obsession may change, but the pattern of ecstatic convulsions remains the same. It is this pattern that Wajda attempts to record as dispassionately as he manages to produce the grim evidence of his hero's crime at the end of the performance. At this moment it dawned on us that we were present at the trial, sealed in a kind of jury box divided from the stage by the balustrade. Do we still have the right and ability to pronounce judgment?

The Russian Symbolist Theatre: An anthology of plays and critical texts, edited and translated by Michael Green, (372pp, Aon Arbor: Ardis, Pupperback, £13.95, 0 88233 798 X) contains nine chapters each devoted to a significant figure in the history of Russian Symbolist Theatre. As well as Andrei Bely's essay of 1904 on *The Cherry Orchard*, the volume contains manifestos: "Against Naturalism in the Theatre" by Valery Briusov, "The Need for Dionysian Theatre" by Viacheslav Ivanov and "The Theatre of the Single Will" by Fyodor Sologub. The anthology also makes available, in most cases in a new translation, the texts of seven plays by Aleksandr Blok, Fyodor Sologub, Mikhail Kuzmin and others.

The answers that lie in the soil

Andrew Sherratt

Archaeology is hard to define but easy to recognize. It is the only means of investigating more than 99 per cent of the human past, as well as those aspects of more recent times for which written records are inadequate. Archaeologists are at work on every inhabited continent, discovering early hominid remains in east Africa, Norse settlements in Newfoundland, the earliest cities in Iraq, royal tombs in China. They are to be found exploring the ancient landscapes of Italy, reconstructing irrigation systems in Peru and burrowing beneath the cellars of European cities. Their discoveries often make headline news; and rightly so, since new finds may throw unexpected light on whole civilizations.

Such a rapidly growing body of evidence is hard to swallow at a single gulp, and raises fundamental questions about the nature of human society and its history. In practice, however, archaeologists only rarely confront the enormous potential of their subject, and often continue to concentrate on the particular bodies of material which first attracted their interest. Some of these had their origins in the collecting habits of wealthy merchants, and occupy pride of place in museums: Greek vases, for example. Others, although objects of a more generalized curiosity, have nevertheless dominated discussion by their very bulk—like the megaliths and pyramids which give the subject its image of a fascination with death. Further back in time, study of the earliest stone tools merges with geology and the study of human evolution and has a scientific flavour, making use of quantification and laboratory-based studies. Each of these traditions has to some extent interbred, in mutual benefit—geological studies of lead isotopes are now used to trace the silver sources of ancient coinage, for instance—but the impression is still one of rich but unintegrated diversity in which each branch of archaeological study has yet to take account of the presence of the others.

A second characteristic of archaeology is its attraction for the popular imagination. Unlike more abstract or arcane subjects, its raw material has an immediate appeal. Archaeology is at once an academic discipline and a form of popular entertainment. (It has also been used as a medium of instruction, in either classical taste or national pride.) Few disciplines carry out their work in such a glare of publicity, or deal with such inherently emotive subjects as Stonehenge, for instance, has recently proved to be. Ancient monuments and artefacts can very easily assume the status of symbols (not unnaturally, since this is why many of them were made), and particularly so in periods of rapid social change or crises of national identity. Emerging nations are particularly prone to this: one might compare the interest in the ruins of Zimbabwe or the Elgin marbles with the emphasis on "Germanic" antiquities at the time of the Reformation, when the northern nations sought in their megaliths and hill-forts the traces of an ancestry which could compare with that of the older cultures of the Mediterranean. Archaeology is thus peculiarly liable to create mythologies, based either on justification of the present or reaction from it through the creation of a utopian past.

The growth of archaeology can be seen in terms of alternating cycles of enthusiasm for its romantic (often nationalist) aspect and its scientific (often international or comparative) aspect—each in its particular social setting and with its own kinds of myth. The patriotic antiquarianism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was succeeded by the rationalistic interests of the Enlightenment and its concern for the "infancy of society". Reports of native societies overseas prompted speculation about the beginnings of European culture, and travel in Greece informed the study of its adolescence. The new study of ancient objects was given an appropriately Greek name. Enthusiasm for the classical (as on advance from "Gothic barbarism") suited the Whig view of history and conveniently provided models for early mass production. Libertarianism was thus tempered with elitism; successful manufacturers were admitted to the establishment with classical taste as the ticket. The idea of a dynamic, liberal European tradition was set against the concept of an alien oriental civiliza-



Richard Ross's "The Delphi Museum, Greece", 1984, is on show in the exhibition Richard Ross: Museology photographs at the John Hansard Gallery, Southampton University, until October 25.

tion, despotic and stagnant, its as yet unreadable hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions giving no clue to its antiquity and importance.

With the Romantic movement, philosophical detachment gave way once again to patriotic involvement: as nation states were carved out of the amorphous empires of central Europe, both dominant ethnic groups and oppressed minorities looked to ancient glories—real or imagined—in a pagan twilight of Germans, Celts and Slavs illuminated both by archaeology and literature. These attitudes could also be transferred abroad, and the Greek struggle for liberation from the Turkish Empire gave rise to philhellenic enthusiasm, while exploration of the Near East produced an intense interest in the lands of the Bible. But the main field of activity was in Europe, where expansion of the industrial infrastructure was producing many new finds from canal-digging and road-building, which filled the regional museums founded as monuments to philanthropy and local pride. Classification of these artefacts produced a division into the three "Ages" of Stone, Bronze and Iron—a museum curator's view of prehistory which provided the quaint terminology still used today.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the model of science increasingly took over from nationalist fervour as the mainspring of archaeological activity, at least in western Europe. The Darwinian controversy gave it a new relevance to the great questions of the age, and expanding overseas empires brought objects and observations of the native peoples of the colonies. Since such peoples had no history, and conventional history seemed to have little relevance, anthropology and scientific archaeology adopted the comparative method. Prehistory (*Vorgeschichte*) distanced itself from narrative, national history, and turned to the more generalized concept of evolution, seeking for stages of development that could be correlated with those exemplified by the world's "primitive" peoples. A new kind of global synthesis appeared, on a scale not seen since the Enlightenment and inheriting many of its preconceptions—archaeological evidence still tended to be used more as an illustration than an independent source of arguments. Those who had benefited from industrialization naturally espoused the idea of progress, well exemplified in the writings of the liberal

politician Sir John Lubbock. But this was also the climate in which Marx and Engels invented their scientific, comparative and evolutionary view of history, which (as well as revolutionizing social analysis) canonized many conventional stereotypes: the despotic Orient became the "Asiatic mode of production". As with much later nineteenth-century writing, technological change seemed to be a dominant force in the development of human culture, and earlier societies were assessed by the yardstick of the Industrial Revolution.

The vision of a scientific archaeology as part of anthropology did not last: each branch became once more involved in its own concerns. Social anthropology discovered participant observation and functionalism, and became absorbed in fieldwork. Archaeology became submerged in a flood of finds (both from local discoveries and foreign expeditions) for which any simple evolutionary classification seemed equally irrelevant. In any case, more powerful forces were at work: German nationalism put ethnic archaeology back on the agenda, in an increasingly explicit alliance with racism. The term *Urgeschichte* emphasized the re-established interest in continuity with historical times. Prehistoric pottery styles became identified with peoples, whose achievements were the manifestation of native genius. Some German scholars derived all innovations from the Aryans, with their laager in the North European Plain; in reaction, some Scandinavian and British writers derived everything from Egypt. Without an independent method of dating, it was hard to tell.

In the years before and during the Second World War, archaeology in Europe underwent perversion and disaster. The Nazis made racial myth into orthodoxy; archaeologists were dismissed, collections looted and destroyed. It is all the more remarkable, then, that one of the most ambitious attempts was being made at this time—albeit in the relative calm of Edinburgh—to survey prehistory and ancient history in its entirety, and to answer the questions of Montaigne and Marx. Gordon Childe has a unique position among archaeologists: the first (and perhaps last) to combine an encyclopedic knowledge of the European and Near Eastern evidence with a taste for philosophy and a gift for its exposition. He took the evolutionary models of later nineteenth-century writers

(along with their emphasis on technology), but interpreted them with a greater sensitivity to historical detail. The results—addressed to the general public as much as to professional colleagues—were presented in *Man Makes Himself* (1936) and *What Happened in History?* (1942). These books set out his conception of two great turning-points in human history: the "Neolithic Revolution" of the discovery of farming, and the "Urban Revolution" which produced the first cities and States. European development, despite its own distinctive features, was set firmly in the context of its indebtedness to the older civilizations of the Near East.

This synthesis went unchallenged during the early post-war years, when austerity and reconstruction made immediate problems more pressing. Continental (and especially German) scholarship, inoculated against ideology by wartime experience, has been slow to bring theoretical ideas back into archaeology, concentrating instead on the comprehensive publication of finds. It was in Britain (closely followed by the Netherlands and Scandinavia) in the mid-1960s that new thinking took place, largely oriented to America, and anthropology. Like much else in that assertive decade, it proclaimed itself as "New" archaeology; and it did indeed bring a new dimension to research.

The context of this movement was an expanding economy and a rapidly increasing university population, in an optimistic and anti-authoritarian atmosphere in which science was the model of success. It coincided with technical advances such as radiocarbon dating, rapid microchemical analysis, and the computer; but its main novelty was an interest in generalization and theory, building models in the manner of ecology and economics and using the language of systems analysis. In a subject where "models" had hitherto implied scale replicas of Stonehenge or Scandinavian golden Bronze Age dress, its impact was startling. The ecological emphasis had a direct influence on fieldwork, bringing to notice classes of evidence previously thrown out with the dirt: animal bones, carbonized seeds, pollen grains and beetle wings—which were now seen as crucial for reconstructing ancient environments. It lifted attention from individual sites to patterns of settlement and the landscape which sustained them, and raised basic questions of economics and demography. The analysis of stone and pottery threw unexpected light on ancient trading networks. Settlement sites were investigated on a large scale as functioning units rather than as quarries for objects. Statistical analysis of ancient cemeteries showed how grave-goods varied with the age, sex and status of the burial. These new kinds of evidence made it possible to ask ambitious questions about the way early societies were organized. Instead of passively collecting information on "culture" or "customs", much of the essay attribution of any kind of change to "diffusion" or "invasion" of new peoples could be questioned, and archaeology's broadening interests drew inspiration from contemporary movements in geography, architecture, biology and ethnography.

One beneficial feature was a growing internationalism, encouraged by a comparative approach which saw particular developments as examples of general processes. Gordon Childe's two revolutions provided inspiration for the same archaeologist to work on the origins of farming in Iran and Mexico, for instance, or to compare the subsequent emergence of urban life in the two areas. As archaeological information became available from regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and south-east Asia, their indigenous achievements in the sphere of agriculture and metallurgy also became clearer. Farming and city life had been independently invented in half a dozen centres across the globe. Other episodes of prehistory were defined: the movement of Polynesia and the Arctic. Bands of pioneers, the arrival of human populations in Australia and the New World. The appearance of *Homo sapiens sapiens* some 40,000 years ago was seen to mark a major threshold in culture, as well as biological change—the emergence of a potential for more complex forms of social organization. Evolution again became an ineluctable metaphor.

The emphasis on immediate factors of evolution, and hence a hostility to ill-defined outside influences, was powerfully reinforced in the case of European prehistory by the application of the first objective time-scale, based on radiocarbon dating. Childe's detailed reconstruction of European development relied heavily on intervention from the Orient, or at least the eastern Mediterranean: megalithic missionaries in the Neolithic, metallurgical prospectors in the Bronze Age, Mycenaean merchants in Wessex. All this now fell by the wayside. If one believed the radiocarbon dates (and German archaeologists kept up an energetic rear-guard action against accepting them), these explanations were anachronistic: megalithic tombs in Brittany were older than the Pyramids; copper-working began in the Balkans before the first cities in Mesopotamia; Stonehenge was older than Mycenae. The physicists looked again at their dates, and corrected them—upwards. The gap was even wider. A new generation of textbooks stressed the autonomy of the European achievement, the indigenous evolution of its cultures.

This belief in autonomous development found its philosophical home in doctrines of cultural anthropology and development economics. In the United States the concept of cultural evolution had been revived as an interpretative framework using an inductive classification of the world's simpler cultures in an arrangement from simple to complex, which went back in its essentials to late nineteenth-century schemes. Like these earlier essays it was open to the same objections: that it did no more than arrange the end-products of complex interactions in a straight line. Instead of technological change, population pressure became the prime mover. Societies became more efficient, co-ordinated and centralized as the inexorable growth in human numbers forced them to adapt and advance. Tribes gave way to chiefdoms, chiefdoms to states, states to empires, as more complex problems needed management and administration. Elites were beneficent and essential, like the nucleus of a living cell or the central nervous system. Functionalism, and the organic analogy, lay at the root of this system of thought. The same assumptions underpinned contemporary atti-

tudes to the Third World: since all societies were naturally evolving in the same direction ("development"), those further back in the queue (the "underdeveloped") needed only to be given a short boost to achieve take-off into sustained growth—piloted, as usual, by benevolent elites.

All this was twenty years ago; though it seems like a century. The oil crisis altered perception in many ways, both directly and indirectly. Homeostatic mechanisms suddenly seemed less relevant than monopolistic advantage. Power, dominance and hegemony entered the archaeological vocabulary. Ideology was reinstated. Marxism (*à la parisienne* rather than *à la russe*) seemed to have a new relevance. Neolithic tribesmen began to exploit their womenfolk; Oriental potentates took time off from managing the irrigation systems to demand tribute; cores began to exploit peripheries. Yet more important was the realization of culture's capacity to lie: burials no longer simply reflected the status of living individuals, but were part of an elaborate scheme to justify inequality—either by denying its existence or by asserting it as a natural condition of the social order. Even pots became symbols of power. Other Paris-centred doctrines were invoked to deal with the large areas of human experience which ecological materialism had neglected: the "inside" view of individual cultures and their cognitive structures. Searching for inspiration, prehistorians investigated the material culture of living communities—mostly in Africa—to understand the rules of the game. (American archaeologists, meanwhile, searched the garbage bags of Tucson for law-like generalizations about rubbish).

In the midst of this, international relations were rediscovered. As underdevelopment came to be seen as a structural problem, related to trading patterns established during a phase of contact and colonization, so the possibility of a pre-capitalist world system has been explored. Surplus Italian wine, shipped up the Rhône in exchange for slaves, could have been used to take advantage of Celtic codes of hospitality and so create a dependent periphery to the Roman world. Mycenaeans may have

century's preliminary reports and specialized monographs. It is aimed at the general reader, and serves this function admirably, with a lively text and excellent plans and photographs.

If the romantic view of classical antiquity were no more than a matter of presentation, then it would hardly be worthy of comment, but in fact it controls many of the commonly held assumptions about the interpretation of the archaeology, which in turn has such direct effects as to determine the dates ascribed to particular features. Thus, the view (which goes back to Montesquieu) of ancient Greece as the embodiment of a "free" Europe opposed to a despotic Asia, has led to a readiness to interpret signs of destruction as evidence for Persian activity—perhaps on analogy with the more recent depredations of the Turks. The problem in Athens is that there is evidence for two phases of destruction, some years apart, but it is the later one which has arbitrarily come to be associated with the Persians (although no generally agreed explanation has emerged for the earlier one). This interpretation began in the 1830s when Ludwig Ross, despite what Wilamowitz was later to call a "very obvious lack of historical training", was allowed to conduct the first excavations on the Acropolis. In the course of his investigations Ross found a potsherd with traces of burning, which he attributed to the Persian sack of Athens. Ross's chronological position was taken up by F. Studniczka in the 1880s, and canonized by Studniczka's student Ernst Langlotz in 1920. A few questions were raised, notably by Emmanuel Löwy in the late 1930s, but his reservations were dismissed as baseless. There is less carlatology these days, as is clear from Professor Camp's carefully chosen words whenever he has to address himself to chronological issues. The history of the Agora in the sixth and fifth centuries hinges on the way the pottery is dated, and there is a growing awareness that by altering the assumptions (or making fewer of

them) a new chronological picture emerges which, while it may be less precise, may prove to be more accurate.

A consequence of the Studniczka/Langlotz dating is to see Athens as an artistically thriving city before the Persian wars, but a "quiescent" one afterwards; whereas the relevant literary and historical sources are of one in showing the city to have been a poor place of little account before 490, and immensely rich after 479. One solution is to attribute the earlier signs of destruction, abandonment and change (discernible in the Agora in and around Buildings C and D) to the Persian occupation and its aftermath, and the second phase to domestic turbulence at the time of the overthrow of the Areopagus in the late 460s. This would make it much easier to accept a recent proposal, which Camp alludes to only indirectly, that buildings such as the Tholos, the Old Bouleuterion, the Metroon and the Royal Stoa were constructed in the early days of Ephialtes/Periclean democracy. Ernst Badian's forthcoming reconstruction to two Peaces of Callias, one in the 460s and the other in 449/448 as will help to resolve many outstanding architectural problems, in the Agora and elsewhere.

It was the view of Winckelmann, the "father of classical archaeology", that classical art flourished in Greece as a direct result of the overthrow of the Pisistratid tyrants in the close of the sixth century. This was subsequently shown to be based on the misdating of a third-century classical coin, but the central idea was retained in the Studniczka/Langlotz chronology, except that now the equivalent phenomenon occurred with the removal of another despotism, that of the Achaemenid Persians. What is now emerging is a picture perhaps less comforting to liberal sympathies; namely that the florescence of ancient art reflects not political liberty but, like the exorcisms of the Agori themselves, the patronage of a rich and powerful elite.

Many of the underlying assumptions were shared by German and British scholars, but the Americans were able to pour more money into building their chosen otavism. From 1931 onwards, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens undertook, with massive corporate funding, the excavation of the civic centre of Athens. Industry, crossed with democracy, yielded the Agora excavations, and it is important to remember this when interpreting the results, for the need to keep up public interest, with reports of exciting discoveries occasionally led to over-romanticized interpretations, some of which are still current. On the whole, however, this vast undertaking has been carried out in exemplary fashion and has set standards for urban excavation elsewhere in the Mediterranean. John M. Camp's attractive book gives a useful overview of half a

Digging for destruction

Michael Vickers

JOHN M. CAMP
The Athenian Agora: Excavations in the heart of classical Athens
211pp. Thames and Hudson. £16.
0500390215

The emotional links between the United States and modern Greece go back a long way. The names given to American towns such as Athens, Troy, Ithaca, Ypsilanti, were a tribute to Greek heroism during the wars of independence, and Greek revival architecture in the United States was, in the words of its historian Talbot Hamlin, "due especially to the enthusiasm the whole Western World, and particularly the new republic, showed for the struggle of Greece". Closely allied to this is a view of antiquity reflected in traditional attitudes inculcated from schooldays onwards, according to which ancient Greece first lit with Eric R. Wolf recently characterized as "the torch of moral purpose in the barbarian night".

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An inventory of their structures and contents

This volume will replace the Orkney Section in Audrey Henshall's *Chambered Tombs of Scotland*, Vol. 1 (1963). March 1987; about £35.

ISBN PREFIX 0 85224

EDINBURGH
University Press, 22 George Square

The New World of old

Christopher Chippindale

DAVID J. MELTZER, DON D. FOWLER and JEREMY A. SARLHOFF (Editors)
American Archaeology Past and Future: A celebration of the Society for American Archaeology 1935-1985
479pp. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. £49 (paperback, £27). 0874746022

This fat volume celebrates the fiftieth birthday of the Society for American Archaeology, drawing on papers given at its anniversary conference in Denver last year. These have been rapidly and handsomely published, though at a price, and with few illustrations and no index. With a special issue of the SAA journal *American Antiquity* (volume 50, number 2, 1985), this adds up to over 700 pages of history and contemporary self-analysis. 1935 was, of course, the year of the birth of American archaeology - Thomas Jefferson was an energetic excavator, and some systematic interest goes back to the conquistadores - but the 1930s were a real turning-point. It was these years that saw the Folsom site establishing the antiquity of man in the New World, the setting-out of major culture-historical sequences, and the first wave of Federally funded salvage programmes.

Today archaeology in the United States, like the country itself, is huge, diverse and often inward-looking. In its occasional isolationist moods the Society thinks of restricting itself entirely to the archaeology of the Americas, and Classical Archaeology is the preserve of the separate Archaeological Institute of America. The main commitment abroad is to Central America, as the patch closest to home with a high civilization to explore.

To most European archaeologists, America remains an alien world. Partly this is a matter of restricted teaching: there is just one permanent post in the British university system specifically for American archaeology. Partly it follows from the close integration of American archaeology into a four-field general anthropology - cultural, physical, linguistic and archaeological - which is nowhere exactly followed this side of the Atlantic. Partly, and more reasonably, it follows from different research conditions and data.

Robert Dunnell begins the book with an acute overview of the major events and changes of the five decades. In his view American archaeology, established as a distinct discipline during the 1930s, was able to concentrate on describing chronology and culture-history in a productive period of normal science that lasted for about thirty years. Then came the self-conscious revolution of the "new archaeology", which damaged the culture-history paradigm beyond repair; in any case, the working-out of the major sequences and independent dating by tree-rings and radiocarbon has made the chronological order increasingly a starting-point for study rather than its conclusion. Dunnell points especially to a 1953 paper by Albert C. Spaulding (not, alas, a contributor to this volume), setting out how to relate units of archaeological analysis to past human behaviour, rather than treating them as passive chronological markers. Like Taylor's *Study of Archaeology* (1948) - surely the most cited and least read reference in the new archaeological literature - Spaulding's paper, statistical and technical, opened avenues not much explored for another fifteen years.

With the new archaeology now itself a piece of history, how does Dunnell see the current state of affairs? Culture-history is certainly dead. (It has no place in the structure of this volume.) The general strategy of the new archaeology is plausible; it "may eventually prove do-able" if only the right techniques are found. So the future is being sought there, with a continued emphasis on method, both inside and outside Lewis Binford's influential framework of "middle-range theory", which hopes to find consistent regularities by which past human behaviour can be reliably recovered from the stones and bones. Until some standard methods are worked out, the current diversity of approaches will continue, running from narrow-minded measurement by physical scientists through to structuralist approaches

which are not really scientific at all.

Seven retrospective papers illustrate, elaborate and contradict this story. With Jesse Jennings, the grand old man of Western US archaeology, notably confident that culture-history remains the core of the subject.

Don Fowler, reviewing conservation (or the lack of conservation) of archaeological resources, is particularly good on the profound and continuing public indifference to the American past. He points to the professional ambivalence symbolized by placing all things Indian in natural-history museums, along with the dinosaurs and stuffed crocodiles, rather than in institutions which celebrate American national identity and inspiration. In the same vein, Bruce Trigger has harsh words for the relation between prehistoric archaeology and American society. A century ago, ethnographic and archaeological museums embodied the natural superiority of whites over native Americans and justified their treatment as the working-out of a providential, if ruthless, historical order of manifest destiny. Yet today, American archaeologists who are using the evidence of native American prehistory simply as a route towards a generalized or universal anthropology, may be as spiritually alienated from native Americans as their forefathers were and may equally, if more subtly, be stealing native material remains for the interests of Euro-American society.

The second part of the book, in three papers, looks at three classic problems, the archaeology of palaeo-Indian hunter-gatherers, the origins of food production in the New World, and the evolution of civilizations.

The final part examines current trends and future prospects. What is most striking here is less the opinions offered than the choice the editors have made as to the four areas most worth attention. They are not all the obvious ones, although Binford, who as an angry and not-so-young man started the ball of new archaeology rolling, is understandably given the last word. The topics discussed are: mathematical and formal models; contemporary cultural resource management; symbolic, structuralist and critical views; and archaeological interpretation.

George Cowgill's survey of mathematical models emphasizes the key distinction between statistics and formal mathematical models. (As an occasional worker in this field myself, I have become used to the assumption that mathematics in archaeology is just another name for statistics - and that the average researcher who has taken to working with statistics is at best a hacker waiting to play with computers.) Admitting how few are the methods that have been employed in ways which are not only technically correct and appropriate to data but also of some real use, Cowgill expects the future to exhibit steady progress rather than great leaps forward.

Cultural resource management (CRM), which in the United States largely means salvage archaeology under commercial contracts, is now an established multi-million-dollar business. Its early days were full of horror-stories. A favourite one is of the surface survey made in upstate New York one February; it found no flints, potsherds, or other small artefacts - but then the average small artefact does not show through a metre or two of lying snow. There are still profound difficulties with the letting of contracts (primarily on cost grounds), with sampling over large areas of landscape, and with the disappearance of findings into a "grey" literature of unpublished and uncatalogued reports. But it is now clear that very good work can be, and is being, routinely done under the CRM procedures.

The Kalispell valley project in Washington state, for example, has fully documented an unusual and unsuspected hunter-gatherer economy, based on the intensive exploitation of the bulbous *cannibis* root. Two features of the programme are instructive. First is its scale; the budget of around \$200,000 is far in excess of the resources available to a university department or the National Science Foundation. And second is the means of financing. It is not Federally funded by public money. In the way British rescue archaeology is largely government-funded, but by a private developer, who plans to build a paper-mill in the valley on private land. But the mill will take water from the local river, nominally a navigable waterway and controlled by a Federal agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, whose permission is therefore required. This is the lever, indirect but legally secure, which brings the project under the Federal archaeology umbrella and obliges the developer to pay in full for necessary salvage archaeology. The recognition of archaeology as an accepted interest-group, rather than an external lobby, was symbolized by the visit of the US Secretary of the Interior to the SAA's 1986 conference, just as he might go to a mining or power-industry meeting. CRM is certainly not going to slip away.

Where the new archaeology, and before it culture-history, largely followed the ideals of empirical philosophy, the structuralist and critical schools surveyed by Mark Leone are taking a radical and relativist stance, in part derived from Marxist and critical theory. Meaning, symbolic values and the processes of ideological control are seen as central both to the functioning of the past societies that archaeology seeks to reconstruct and to the role of archaeology in present societies. There is no "real past" out there, or at any rate no means to reach it.

Patty Jo Watson, aware that critical schools might induce a "terminal sceptical crisis" in the subject, finds that archaeological interpretation in 1985 nevertheless has the same central tendency as it did in 1935, the description and explanation of a real past, which is in part accessible to us. There are big questions here, of a kind documentary historians have not very often explored. While it is agreed that "mere description" will no longer suffice, it is far from clear what constitutes the "explanation" of a past pattern of human behaviour as archaeologically documented. Here, surely, there is much to be learnt from disciplines like palaeontology which also seek to make sense of distant historical events, within a generalizing framework and with information recovered by physical sciences.

So will American archaeology come full circle, and finally achieve again an agreed method and agreed programme, as it did in the 1930s, when it got quietly on with culture-history? Here I find Donald Grayson's paper the most instructive. It is not in the "prospect" section of the book but in the oldest bit of the history department, exploring the nineteenth-century arguments over coliths. "Coliths" (from the Greek for "dawn-stone") were supposed to be

very early stone tools, usually of a simple crude form, which was the very reasonable priori expectation for a first human technology. But it was precisely those simple forms which would be simulated entirely by natural causes: the crashing of breakers on a gravel beach, the pressure of ice on the rocks glacially gathered - ns was vividly shown by the coincidence of a few elegant coliths in deposits as ancient they could not possibly contain human artefacts. It was not a problem of culture history but, as Grayford elegantly shows, one of Binford's "middle range"; that is, of the application of the relationship between a particular archaeological phenomenon - the shape, stones - and one of human behaviour - the making of stone tools. That is why this controversy, and its resolution, are so much the modern manner, even down to the rigour with which the arguments were presented. (There are some cruel words in this book, for example "macho rocksmanship" for one school of experimental flintknappers, but no recent dispute has quite matched the abusive height of inventing "a new form of mental illness" called "anti-colithism", to account for the very real party's obstinacy.) Statistical considerations, modern experimental replication, as precise dating evidence were crucial - as so often are today. No wonder just the same arguments were repeated when Louis Leakey claimed the Calico Hills site in California as a very early site with a primeval American industry.

Grayson's classic case-study of a quintessentially modern problem played out a century ago puts in question the easy view, that the current era of confusion is a temporary lapse before another period of normal science restores the peace. Perhaps the culture-history era, when the SAA was founded, was not so normal at all but the exception, a rare event when it was possible, necessary and useful work in an unquestioned paradigm; afterwards, American archaeology returned to its natural ferment and productive argument over ends and means. Perhaps the culture-history era was nothing like as quiet as we now persuade ourselves that it was. Perhaps there never was a distinct culture-history era at all. The SAA centenary history may tell us so. Meanwhile, we have this fine and exceptional celebration to show many of the strengths and some of the weaknesses of American archaeology today.

On Raedwald's regalia

James Graham-Campbell

ANGELA CARE EVANS
Sutton Hoo Ship Burial
127pp. British Museum. £5.50.
07141 05449

Sutton Hoo in Suffolk was a royal cemetery in the early Anglo-Saxon period and the ship-burial beneath a mound, excavated in 1939, is thought to be the grave of Raedwald, King of East Angles, who died in 624 or 625. The ship, nearly 30 metres long, contained a textile-hung chamber in which a varied and unique assemblage of grave-goods had been deposited, ranging from a parade helmet and shield, through symbols of power and sumptuous regalia, to imported Eastern Mediterranean silverware and ordinary domestic items. There was no recognizable trace of a body, but the current excavations of the gravefield, revealing unaccompanied inhumations and cremations beside the mounds, have demonstrated just how fugitive skeletal material is in its acid sand.

The ship-burial has been published in three large volumes (1975-83) by Rupert Bruce-Mitford and his British Museum colleagues, including Angela Care Evans who edited its final part and has now written this "popular guide". The definitive report comprises some 2,000 pages, and this short book is intended for those without such detailed interests (or a couple of hundred pounds to spare) as its official alternative. It follows on from a guide, first published in 1947 and several times revised as a *Handbook*, by Bruce-Mitford himself. This had to combine the functions of an interim

scholarly account and a popular publication. Evans has modified the approach and expanded the contents to tell the story of Sutton Hoo and its interpretation, from the earliest present excavations, but its general approach (including size) has remained the same, even if the scholarly notes have been dropped.

On this basis British Museum Publications seem to have a most peculiar notion of what a "popular guide" should be. The reader who does not know an after-scan from a stab-end, or a gunwale from a garboard, will be struggling with the ship chapter, and will wish to learn about the Sutton Hoo jewels; you must first teach yourself to distinguish *cloisonné* from *champlevé* and *niello* from *niello*. The book is lavishly illustrated, but more reconstructions would have helped, and would also have saved on description.

The prevalence of specialist terminology (without even a glossary), repetition of facts and enigmatic statements, suggest that the book was hastily written and poorly edited. Sometimes the results are simply misleading. What is the reader to deduce from the statement: "a lost hanging-bowl that appears to have contained a dog suggests that not all were as water containers"? That some of the bronze bowls were used as dog-baskets rather than "tableware"? (This is presumably a reference to the lost bowl from the River Witham which has a centre-piece in the form of a dog that could as well be the Loch Ness Monster.) Occasionally, the results are just plain inaccurate. "Bede was not a monk," Lindisfarne. This will not do for an official British Museum guide that will be quoted and regurgitated in many other popular works on the Anglo-Saxons.



Some Small Harvest

The Memoirs of Glyn Daniel

Glyn Daniel's first taste of fame came in the 1950s when he was chairman of the immensely popular TV series *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?* which permanently changed the place of archaeology in British consciousness. In spite of being made TV personality of the year in 1955, however, he continued to write scholarly archaeological books and became editor of *Antiquity*. He travelled, lectured and excavated, wrote three detective novels, became Disney Professor and was tutor to the Prince of Wales at Cambridge. Glyn Daniel's account of his full and varied life is perceptive, witty and irresistible.

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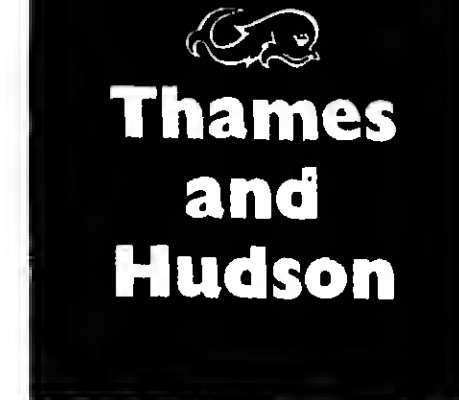
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Below the water line

Richard Bradley

I. M. STEAD, J. B. BOURKE and DON BROTHWELL.
Lindow Man: The body in the bog
218pp. British Museum Publications. £15.
07141 13867
DON BROTHWELL.
The Bog Man and the Archaeology of People
128pp. British Museum Publications. £5.95.
07141 12840
BRYONY and JOHN COLES.
Sweet Track to Glastonbury: The Somerset Levels in prehistory
200pp, with 146 illustrations, 16 in colour.
Thames and Hudson. £18.
0500 390223

The contents of many museums have a monotonous sameness about them: worked flints in abundance; sorry skeletons; rows of pots and abandoned tools. The same impression is given by archaeological excavations: layer upon layer of dirt, from which the last traces of ancient structures are teased with obvious difficulty. Small wonder that it has been claimed that "the archaeologist digs up rubbish then writes it down".

Like most first impressions, this is a partial view, but archaeologists themselves have been very slow to dispel it. The British Museum's current exhibition of post-war archaeology in Britain takes a welcome step in this direction and occasions the publication of two of these books. Its centrepiece is not an artefact at all, but an Iron Age corpse, Lindow Man ("Pete Morsli"), and among the most striking features of the display are wooden objects from the Fenland and the Somerset Levels. There is even a piece of Neolithic string. While all this adds a welcome variety, even more striking are the preserved structures found in recent years, from timber roads like the Sweet Track in Somerset to the massive wharves of Roman London.

The Biblical connection

P. R. S. Moorey

JOAN OATES.
Babylon
216pp with 137 illustrations Thames and Hudson. Paperback, £5.95.
0500 273847
JONATHAN TUBB (Editor).
Palestine in the Bronze and Iron Ages: Papers in honour of Olga Tufnell
248pp. Institute of Archaeology, London University. £20.
0905833 156
PIOTR BIAŁKOWSKI.
Jericho in the Late Bronze Age
240pp. Warminster: Aris and Phillips. Paperback, £22.
085668 3205

Near Eastern Archaeology is no longer the favourite it once was with general publishers. The first major work in English on the subject was a two-volume best-seller. In the words of an enthusiastic contemporary, Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains* (1849) was "not only perfect in style, astonishing in knowledge, but a marvel in its interest and completeness". It established a tradition that survived for just over a century, through which the results of fieldwork were lucidly and intelligently presented to scholar and general reader alike.

Kenyon, Mallowan and Woolley, to name but some of the most active field archaeologists in the Near East of the last generation, wrote books that were at the time, and to a degree remain, model presentations for the reading public. But none of the sample of publications reviewed here deals with recent field research and two are from specialist publishers. The pages of the *TL5* in the past few years indicate that this is not exceptional. Is it public taste that has changed or the nature of the subject?

An overwhelming increase of archaeological activity of all kinds has been confounded by changes in the nature of communication among Near Eastern archaeologists. No

The common element is waterlogging. For a century or more our understanding of the past has been enlivened by the freak preservation of objects, buildings or even people, whose existence would hardly register on dry land. Famous examples include the "lake villages" of Glastonbury and Meare or the bog bodies of Scandinavia. Their public appeal is obvious from the success of P. V. Glob's book *The Bog People*.

It is not difficult to see why archaeologists working in Britain have been so slow to exploit the opportunities offered by waterlogged sites. They are expensive to excavate, costing ten times as much as those on dry land. They take a long time to record to modern standards, and as these three books show, they involve, or should involve, the collaboration of a wide range of specialists. There may be a danger of saying more about less, but the work of the last decade has given us so much that is new that there is no sign of exhaustion yet. The waterlogged levels of York, Carlisle and Dublin tell us more about the buildings of our early towns than traditional excavation could ever do. Work in the East Anglian Fens is rewriting our prehistory as it goes – who would have expected to find a buried hill-fort only six feet above sea level?

We must be careful to distinguish between chance finds, like that of Lindow Man in a Cheshire peat-bog, and long-term programmes of research like the work of the Somerset Levels Project, described in John and Bryony Coles's book. Both happened in the face of commercial peat-cutting, but they represent two very different types of archaeology. The Somerset project has run for over twenty years, and highly selective excavation has shed considerable light on the development of a lowland landscape, from the beginnings of farming to the eve of the Roman conquest. The discovery of Lindow Man was an accident, and the careful research reported in the two books from the British Museum made the most of an opportunity that no one could have foreseen. The monograph compiled by T. M. Stead,

J. B. Bourke and Don Brothwell is the definitive report on their inquest on Lindow Man and contains as much technical detail as anyone could ask. Brothwell has also provided a more general account of this work and of the potential of research on preserved corpses in general. It has much in common with the Coles's book, which is an elegant review of their fieldwork in Somerset. Much of the fine detail is already in print, and again this account is aimed at a wider audience.

Both books succeed admirably in conveying the unique potential of "wet" archaeology, and Brothwell's ranges more briefly over other preserved bodies, mummified, desiccated and frozen. They are very well illustrated, although some of Brothwell's photographs need rather a strong stomach; indeed, that is what some of them show. As an indication of the range of skills deployed in wetland archaeology, they can hardly be bettered, and because each focuses on a single piece of research, they are a better introduction to scientific archaeology than many books devoted to that purpose. The Coles's book is informative on pollen analysis dendrochronology, the study of preserved insects and the use of radiocarbon dating. Brothwell's summary extends to palaeobotany and palaeopathology. Each account gains materially from the remarkable preservation of the evidence.

When first a woman's head and later a man's body were discovered in Lindow Moss, the police were understandably suspicious, and their doubts were not allayed until both finds had been dated by radiocarbon. Now we know that Lindow Man was in his twenties; we know what food he had eaten and can reconstruct the landscape in which he met his end. We even know that he had been struck on the head, garrotted and that his throat had been cut. Detailed research has given us an impression of his state of health and even of his physical appearance – he has been seen in the audience at several conferences. All this information has been obtained by the minute analysis recorded in the British Museum monograph and illus-

trates the range of skills that can be brought to bear on well-preserved archaeological remains.

Lindow Man is not without faults. Some of the contributions are over-extended and repeat the same information unnecessarily. It is not in the vulgar, tabloid sense of that another's findings. The final chapter, on the threads together, is valuable but too long. Brothwell's popular account strikes a better even balance and will be sufficient for general reader.

If the Lindow project is a good illustration of the techniques available to modern archaeology, the Coles's work extends the approaches to the reconstruction of an ancient landscape, the peat fens between the Mendips and Quantock Hills. They have excavated and analysed a whole series of wooden trackways from first-class figure drawings. In linking settlement areas on the higher ground and have embarked on a long overdue assessment of the Iron Age "lake villages" covered between 1892 and 1908. Their book is a sparkling synthesis of a great amount of cult work and is a triumphant demonstration of the special skills needed in excavating waterlogged structures. More important, this book gives a feel of how good archaeological research is planned and how it runs from day to day. The authors have a light touch and write with vigour and wit. The book also includes a first-class figure drawing. If you want to see what modern archaeology can achieve, this is a good place to start.

I have emphasized the strengths of wet archaeology as they are revealed in these books, but in our enthusiasm we must not forget that most people lived on dry ground and that we need to investigate them too. The Somerset trackways link up the lowland ridges which rise out of the Levels, and the settlements serviced by these routes have been well above the water-table. It is ever poor their preservation, such areas must still be investigated, so that we can relate the prehistoric roads studied in the Coles's book. In every sense, "Only connect..."

Paul Cartledge

A century after the subject began to acquire respectability as an academic discipline, Classical Archaeology is, or ought to be, in crisis. Not in the vulgar, tabloid sense of that another's findings. The final chapter, on the threads together, is valuable but too long. Brothwell's popular account strikes a better even balance and will be sufficient for general reader.

A great deal is at stake, not least our Western cultural heritage – or rather what we choose to make of the manifold legacy of Greece and Rome. For example, it cannot be accidental that the controversy over the restoration or reappropriation of what is quaintly called "cultural property" resolves itself so often into wrangling over the Elgin/Parthenon marbles, at any rate in the media of Britain. Again, John Paul Getty could, hypothetically, have modelled his museum on an Anasazi pueblo and collected Amerindian art, but he opted for a Pompeian villa and the art of Greece and Rome; the sum of 7 million dollars for his Foundation reputedly paid for a (possible) *kyros* perfectly illustrates the penetration into our own times of that "lure of Classical sculpture" about which Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny have written periphrastically for the period 1500–1900. Then, for present purposes, there is the intellectual role played by Classical Archaeology (or an earlier incarnation) in the development of archaeology as a discipline – a role premised on the fact that, as Peter Kidson needed to remind readers of the revamped *Legacy of Greece* in 1981, "Greek art was once more or less synonymous with art as such". Illustrations of these could easily be multiplied. Enough, I hope, been said to show that Classical Archaeology matters, politically and emotionally and culturally as well as (merely) academically.

John McK. Camp II introduces his recent book, *The Athenian Agora*, with the following words: "If Classical archaeology can be described as the study of ancient history and culture through physical remains...". The definition seems innocuous enough, indeed unexceptionable at first reading. But the conditional construction invites a doubt, not just about the archaic jargon whereby "ancient" means "ancient-Greek-Roman", but about the relationship of archaeology and history. Or rather about several and mutual conceptualizations. Within the past quarter of a century there have been developed both a "new" archaeology and a "new" history. I hold no brief for the new archaeology. Novelty does not connote improved quality and is rarely if ever absolute. It does do for the fever tone of the polemic indulged in by some sectaries. What needs to be extracted from the ferment, clearly, is the fact that is the most fruitful for future research – elements of the old and the new, in theory as well as in practice.

Begin with, and stress in particular, theory. Classical archaeologists, like ancient historians, have typically and traditionally been resistant to explicit theorizing of all kinds, especially perhaps in the English-speaking world. The former tend to concern themselves with routine classification (above all chronological and typological) and very restricted general analysis in "common-sense" terms. The latter are preoccupied with getting the facts right, in order to reconstruct how it actually happened; they consider the notions they said "event" to be unproblematic, and they believe in letting the "written" sources speak for themselves.

The advocates of New Archaeology and its kindred, for various reasons, judge these attitudes, and the theories or dogmas they imply, to be "antidivine" at best. True, in their sometimes near-violent reaction some of these archaeologists may have perpetrated an equally outmoded and pernicious version of positivism, whether in the expectation that scientific laws of human behaviour would soon be discovered and neatly ranked in hierarchical order, or under the misapprehension that societies really are on all fours with the models postulated by cybernetics and general systems theory; and some of these historians may have veered too far towards subjectivism. But whatever the merits or demerits of particular theories, their shared concern with the theoretical presuppositions of their work has had many beneficial results.

For example, it has been salutary to be reminded of Charles Darwin's dictum that "all observation must be for or against some view, if it is to be of any service". The goal of pure, objective description, that is to say, as opposed to scientific explanation or at least some form of understanding of the past, is as stultifying as it is illusory. Moreover, the history or pre-history a historian or archaeologist writes, which is not to be confused with "the past", makes no sense without theories or at any rate hypotheses or, more modestly, just a point of view. In short, this preoccupation with theory has if nothing else engendered a healthily reflexive self-consciousness about aims and methods and assumptions.

To put this point more concretely and archaeologically: although proverbially the spade may be unable to lie (in the sense that archaeological data are direct and authentic and reach the interpreter below the level of conscious intention), it owes that undoubted merit in part to the circumstance that it cannot speak. It has therefore to be made to speak by the archaeologist, whose task is to devise and apply the appropriate philology of artefacts and other accidentally surviving material remains of past societies. At a higher level of abstraction, resort must be had to explicitly formulated models or simplifying assumptions, mental constructs without which, as we were rather severely admonished in Moses Finley's last book, "there can be no explanation, there can only be reportage and crude taxonomy, antiquarianism in its narrowest sense".

Let me now turn from theory to practice, though that distinction is of course no more than relative. Almost twenty years ago the ancient historian S. C. Humphreys laid out an agenda for the Classical archaeologist who would contribute towards understanding and explaining the social and economic history of Classical Greece. The New Archaeology was then in its infancy, and it was rather her unusual background in anthropology and awareness of developments in the philosophy of social explanation that underlay Mrs Humphreys's interdisciplinary programme. But it is remarkable in retrospect how far she anticipated some of the main trends of non-Classical archaeology. It is also true, however, that her agenda was fundamentally broad and often, largely for financial reasons, less than fully practicable on or under the ground. She also glossed over some of the intractable problems of all mute archaeological data, for example the fact that very similar artefacts and material assemblages can result from very different socio-economic institutions and practices. But even so, as a historian with a special interest in ancient society and economy, I find it discouraging that the ideas then expressed seem as yet to have had relatively little impact on Classical Archaeology in Greece or indeed most of the twenty-five or so modern countries that lay partly or wholly within the ambit of the Greco-Roman world. New archaeologists are concerned to explain societal stability and change at the macro-social level. They have naturally therefore favoured holistic, systemic frameworks of theory that address themselves to long-run processes rather than the activities of individuals or the individual event; and they have shaped their practical techniques of information retrieval and analysis accordingly. Whereas the "old" archaeologist might have been expected to know how to manipulate the dumpy level and wash the occasional lump of excavated soil, the New, total-environmental archaeologist routinely wields complicated instruments like the "differential fluxgate gradiometer" and practises techniques of scientific analysis like "roth flotation".

Deified the contemporary written sources available to Classical Archaeology – or, alternatively, freed from the tyranny of texts composed from the viewpoint and for the benefit mainly of the tiny leisure-class élite – New archaeologists ideally seek as complete as possible recovery of the entire material assemblages and environments of the people they study, those produced by and acting upon the *hoi polloi* no less than the perhaps untypical few.

Disabused, moreover, of the will-o'-the-wisp ambition of universal prescription and prediction, they aim now rather for middle-range theories somewhere between particularistic classification and analysis and strict hypothetico-deductive method. They turn for this purpose to, for instance, ethnoarchaeology and experimental archaeology, since these are comparative ways of investigating environmental restraints and societal responses that may yield testable explanatory hypotheses.

Realizing, too, the inevitably limited nature of most excavation, limited both in physical and in interpretative scope, they have turned increasingly towards other, non-destructive methods: in particular, they have developed the intensive regional survey, which at its most sophisticated may be expected to inform suggestively on such economic and social fundamentals as demography, environmental change, agricultural procedures, landholding, market organization and communications.

Finally, wherever possible and appropriate, quantification is their watchword. For, to quote the aphorism of a pioneering mathematical economist, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, "there is a limit to what we can do with numbers, as there is to what we can do without them". Taken together, these aims and methods may fairly be called revolutionary. They have thrown into doubt the conventional wisdom in archaeology and gone far towards establishing it as an independent subject with its own intellectual paradigm, rather than the mere "handmaiden" of the supposedly architectonic discipline of History.

Classical Archaeology, it must be said at once, has been by no means untouched or unmoved by this intellectual *démarche*. Space forbids many examples, but part of the British School of Athens's centenary appeal is earmarked for expanding the resources of its Fitch laboratory of scientific analysis. Petrographic and neutron activation analysis of fine pottery excavated in, for instance, France and Romania, has given the lie to the onetime eye and removed from the sphere of Archaic Greek "trade" large amounts of in fact locally produced imitations of cherished imported fabrics. Microscopic analysis has even been used to authenticate the famous "I belong to Phidias" graffiti on a mug excavated in the master's workshop at Olympia, though the zeal to prove it genuine perhaps smacks rather too much of Classical Archaeology's traditional concern to prove or illustrate the written sources; one might compare reaction to the find of the Riace bronzes or of the so-called "Tomb of Philip" at Verghina in Macedonia, which is unhappily reminiscent of the officially

discarded treasure-hunting mentality. As for paleo-ecological recovery, one could cite the multi-period Fenland project or, on a much more restricted time-scale, the botanical and biochemical study of coprolites from the Antonine Wall site of Bearsden, demonstrating a strongly vegetarian diet. Similarly, the bone material from a settlement at Kassope in north-west Greece has been recorded phase by phase with a view to understanding economy as well as diet.

Intensive regional surveying came of age in Greece with the publication in 1982 of the University of Southampton's Melos project. Different in kind and scale, but scarcely less impressive, is the three-year survey of 10,000 square miles of Libyan desert by a team led by G.B.D. Jones and G. Barker (formerly of the Italian Molise survey); of the 3,000 forming settlements located, one has been fully excavated to show that by the 70s AD its "factory" could produce 350 or more gallons of oil from olives cultivated by exploiting the local rainfall runoff characteristics. Related to these surveys are the exploration of the *chora* (rural territory) of the Sicilian state of Kamurina in tandem with its political and administrative centre, and the integrated analysis of both the late Roman villa and its estate at Winterton in Humberside. Quantification, too, is now firmly established, notably in the study of transport amphorae both Greek (for example in the Black Sea region, which Soviet archaeologists now study as a unit) and Roman.

There has, then, been change and I would say progress especially in the last decade. But it is not yet enough. To take just one of Humphreys's feasible suggestions, more firms and village-sites need to be excavated (and, I would add, perhaps relatively fewer cemetery sites, the interpretation of which in terms of social ranking is notoriously unstraightforward).

There remains one major desideratum upon which Anthony Snodgrass, above all, has laid the proper emphasis. Indeed, I would say it is the most important plank in the platform for fruitifying Classical Archaeology with the insights of New Archaeology. All archaeological data are direct, independent and in theory limitless expandable; but, he contends, the data of Classical Archaeology perhaps uniquely offer the further possibility of conducting controlled experiments – that is, of testing the theories developed within New Archaeology (and indeed elsewhere) against the evidence of both the written sources and the rich archaeological data-base to comprehend better the origins, growth and change of complex societies. This opportunity has yet to be adequately grasped, and the most heated discussions within Classical Archaeology still tend to be about chronography (basic though that obviously is) and not macro-social explanation.

The reasons for the present stand-off between Classical Archaeology and New Archaeology (with the exceptions noted above) are various and complex. I select just two. First, and more sordidly, what can only be described as an academic demarcation dispute.

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Classical Archaeology, as the anthropologist Clifford Geertz recently noted (TLS, June 7, 1985), "has kept its borders patrolled". The discovery that the Greeks and Romans can be studied profitably otherwise than through the medium of their languages would, one might have thought, have been largely welcome to Classical archaeologists. But their ability to profit from it is hampered by their resistance to "foreign" ideas, and the prescribed route to an academic career in Classical Archaeology is through an essentially philological training. Which is doubly paradoxical in that Classical Archaeology has traditionally been interpreted, practised and taught as a subject more akin to non-verbal art-history than either Classics (that is, the study of Greek and Latin language and literature) or Archaeology.

Hence what I called earlier the "snmewhat ambiguous independence" of Classical Archaeology, and the second of my reasons why Classical Archaeology and New Archaeology show little sign of entente, let alone concord. For the two sides quite literally do not see eye-to-eye and mix the visual sense very differently. What has perhaps optimistically been labelled cognitive archaeology may offer the glimmerings of a shared perspective in the future. But the unforgotten denigration of mere beauty by New Archaeology has if anything hindered Classical Archaeology's propensity towards connoisseurship, that is towards stressing the individual quality of, and the presumed artistic intention behind, the "works of art" it prefers to study. This is unfortunate because it entails the relative neglect of the vital contexts, functions and meanings of these artefacts for societies the vast majority of whose members were more or less illiterate.

Doubtless, few Classical archaeologists would wholly endorse the glib assertion of Oscar Wilde that "To pass from the art of a time to the time itself is the great mistake that all historians make", since that would be to exclude automatically a crucial part of the cultural history of the ancient world. Yet it was surely symptomatic that, to select just one case, the visual evidence relevant to the study of pederasty in Athenian society was first systematically exploited by Sir Kenneth Dover and not by a Classical archaeologist.

What has been mildly suggested here may be considered misguided, even dangerous in some quarters; but it is hardly brand-new. Many of my remarks are anticipated in Grahame Clark's blueprint for the "complete archaeologist" in his *Archaeology and Society* or, nearer home, in the eleventh chapter ("Roman Britain") of R. G. Collingwood's *Autobiography* — both works originally published in 1939. However, every now and then it seems to be necessary to be reminded about past achievements or proposals and for them to be replaced, as Aristotle said of his political programme, in a new synthesis. Constructing such a synthesis is not merely a matter of taste, a choice as it were between *nouvelle* and *ancienne cuisine*, but a matter of ensuring the future continued health of Classical Archaeology. What Colin Renfrew has with lamentable accuracy called the "Great Divide" between Classical Archaeology and archaeology-as-anthropology (in a broad sense) must therefore be healed, and without undue delay.

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An eighteenth-century engraving of Stonehenge after Conrad Marth Metz; on illustration from Stonehenge Antiquities by Rodney Legg (1769). Sherborne: Dorset Publishing, £9.95. 05092129325. The book reproduces the 1725 printing of "A Fool's Bolt soon shot at Stonehenge", here ascribed to Robert Gay, together with "Stonehenge, Temple of the Druids", edited by the author and John Fowles from John Aubrey's Monumenta Britannica, and many other historical accounts.

judges? What was the nature of the central barrier, the feature which distinguishes the Roman circus from the earlier Greek stadium? What was the significance of a built-up circus in a provincial city? Was not racing more widespread throughout the provinces in convenient open spaces on the outskirts of cities with no more than a temporary grandstand for local dignitaries? Are not monumental circuses away from Rome really no more than the follies of local worthies who would prattle over the races just as the emperors did at Rome?

Before an answer can be offered to any of these questions the evidence must be collected and sifted; not only the actual remains and other records of individual arenas but the many portrayals of circuses and chariot racing in public and domestic ornament. All this has been done by John Humphrey and the result is presented in a volume whose monumental scale befits the subject.

The work is founded on an examination of the Circus Maximus at Rome, both the remains *in situ* and the many depictions of it in mosaic, painting, relief sculpture and on coins. The great arena was truly the prototype of many lesser imitations and occupied what was once the marshy valley between the Palatine and Aventine hills. Tradition held that racing began there under the ancient kings of Rome but its enclosure as a monumental arena stems from the much later era of the emperors, when the city had become the swollen capital of a Mediterranean empire. By then a royal box had been constructed to overlook the arena,

linked with the great imperial residence on the Palatine. Today hardly anything of its superstructure is visible but its shrub-covered outlines are still easily discernible. Once it held around 150,000 spectators (most of the other arenas held only a third of this number). The twelve starting-gates (*carceres*) extended across the full width of the arena at one end, along a curved line which gave each team an equal chance to gain a good position by the point where the barrier (*euripus*) confined the course to half the width of the arena. One important gain from the painstaking researches of Dr Humphrey is a full appreciation of the attention to detail and precision in design to ensure that the race was fair for each competitor. Several devices and facilities to deal with collisions and other emergencies were also incorporated. Care was taken that the mechanisms for counting laps — curious arrangements of "eggs" or dolphins — were visible to drivers amid the dust and chaos of a race. On the matter of the actual surface for racing we learn that much was gained from filming the re-creation of chariot racing for *Ben Hur*. Soft sand or similar material alone would not do; what was required was a firm base of crushed rock covered by a thin layer of fine sand, though problems of drainage still persisted.

For much of the year the Circus Maximus will have had the appearance of a fair, filled with all manner of shops and stalls. On race

days it would be transformed with flags, bunting and drapery, although it seems that racegoers were not, like those in the amphitheatre, afforded the protection of canvas awnings manipulated by marines from the imperial navy. Mishaps, injuries and fatalities were common, for spectators as much as for competitors, and evidently hardly merited notice. Disasters which made the headlines saw 1,112 souls perish in the middle of the second century AD through a collapse of seating, while a little over a century later the total of dead after a collapse was said to have reached 13,000. Though likely to be exaggerated, such reports are testimony to the hazards of attending any crowded arena or circus; the quality were secure in their boxes and enclosures integral to the permanent edifice, while the masses were perched high on hastily erected temporary stands.

For all that it lacks the crispness and clarity of Alan Cameron's studies of charioteers (1973) and circus factions (1976), Humphrey's book is likely to last for years as a work of reference on the remains of circuses in the Roman Empire. Every item is registered and patiently assessed for its relevance and intelligibility. But old-fashioned catalogues of the site remains, and secondary material (where problems of context and interpretation could have been treated along with bibliography and modern controversy) might have served the reader better than the laboriously reworked descriptive text, from which reference to the notes becomes increasingly labo-

rious. This is more than a quibble on presentation since there is here a great deal of important work on the Roman circus, but the arrangement is obstructive and the general argument is hard to follow. An example to the extent to which it is reasonable to infer the presence of chariot racing from its depictions in mosaics and the like in provinces where there is no trace of any monumental circus. Thus, for the remnant of British chariots in earlier days the province of Britain has yielded no trace of a circus (though there is certainly room for one within the walls of London).

The meagre evidence from some provinces seems to be viewed as a progressively weaker diffusion of the monumental ideal from the imperial capital. Given what we know of the traditions in Celtic provinces it would be surprising if racing were not widespread, in a sense that demanded the minimum of equipment and certainly not a permanent arena. Might it not be better to treat that, for all that it leaves a little trace for the archaeologist, as the norm and to see the likes of the Circus Maximus as device for contriving, through the use of chariot racing in a confined space, a montage of the emperor and his subjects sharing the triumph of the winner?

The circus proved to be a great success (a finitely more so than the amphitheatre, which was almost without exception eschewed in imperial propaganda): an intelligible presentation of emperor, court and people easily manipulated for the formal hierarchies of late Roman ornament. The emperor at the circus is familiar to us — a "symbiosis" of ruler and ruled. Cameron describes it — as it was satisfying to those later emperors who chose to incorporate a full-size circus in their now palatial residences around the empire. Very properly such areas are fully described, but the overall tendency of the book, in respect of chariot racing and its provision for it, is rather like treating *Acropolis* the genuine article and the traditional country point-to-point as the humblest of imitations.

From his own researches, notably on the well-preserved circus at Lepcis Magna in North Africa, the author offers much that is new. The mechanism for opening the starting-gates is now described, and the location of several items that were familiar from portrayals of the Roman circus seems to be settled. Beyond these the circus appears of limited interest: the matter of architecture. Little historical development can be discerned and the dating of individual arenas is particularly difficult. The basic needs of ruler, spectators and competitors evidently did not alter and no architect appears to have departed from the familiar shaped arena with a subtle alignment of the central barrier that was different from the main axis. All this stands in contrast with the other branches of the Roman building industry, where change and innovation approached the dramatic.

Chariot racing did not originate with the Romans but none exploited better its spectacular potential. In Greece such races had always been part of athletic festivals. Rich men would enter a team with a professional driver but it was the owner to whom the glory of victory accrued. At Rome the business was controlled by associations, or factions, identified by colour — red, white, blue and green. It was the colour which triumphed and the emperor's own sympathies were widely discussed, though it seems that their political religious, social and economic importance had been much exaggerated. The role of factions in the races was imported from Rome to the Greek East, where it appears to have flourished, not so much in the old Greek lands where stadia and the races retained their human scale, but in such areas as Syria and Egypt. Here the tradition of chariot racing was well-founded and there were large populations who would willingly join in the spectacles so beloved by kings and tyrants. This is well explained in an excellent chapter on circuses and chariot racing in the eastern provinces.

Roman Circuses is not only a good introduction to a fascinating institution of the Roman Empire but it will also prove an indispensable aid for those archaeologists in the future who are confronted with the fragmented remains of an arena specially constructed for the spectacles of the races.

Signed against unsigned

Mary Beard

DONNA KURTZ (Editor)
Beazley and Oxford: Lectures delivered in the Wolfson College, Oxford, 28 June 1985
71pp. Oxford University Committee for Archaeology; distributed by Oxbow Books, 10 St Cross Road, Oxford OX1 3TU. £5.
0942816100

The history of vase painting in sixth and fifth century BC Athens is dominated by a large — occasionally exotic, occasionally comic — cast of painters: Exekias, Makron, "The Painter of the Woolly Styrts", Sakonides, "Elbows Out", "The Pan Painter" and hundreds more. Many of these artistic personalities were the discovery (or, if one is sceptical, the invention) of Sir John Beazley, Professor of Classical Archaeology at Oxford from 1925 to 1956. Beazley was a revolutionary in ancient art history. He followed the method of Giovanni Morelli, who had argued (in respect of Renaissance painting) that the identity of painters was most clearly revealed in the treatment of apparently trivial details such as ear-lobes or finger-nails; and so — comparing nipple with nipple, wheel-spoke with wheel-spoke — Beazley sorted, ordered and grouped the figured scenes of Athenian painted pottery. Where one of the pots of a group was signed by its painter, that name was assigned to the whole group; where all signatures were lacking, Beazley used some appropriate sobriquet for the presumed artist, often based on some distinctive element of his work — "The Flying Angel Painter", for example, or "The Straggly Painter". From a largely unidentified mass of thousands of pots and fragments, a world of "artists" was created.

Classical art historians have come to argue fiercely whether Beazley was correct in his identification of painters (and in the chronology implied by that identification) and whether future developments in the subject should follow the broad lines of connoisseurship which he practised. Beazley still carries a large majority of support, with particular loyalty from his followers of the "Oxford School", but it is becoming increasingly felt that the eventual judgment on "Beazleyism" will be essentially negative. Of course, where names are not signed, attribution will always remain a matter of dispute. Beazley cannot be proved to be wrong. But a comparison with later periods of art history shows that, where documentary evidence provides a surer guide to the identity of artists, the Morellian method practised by Beazley often conspicuously fails to get the answer right. Meanwhile, excitement over recent work, largely by French and other European scholars, has pointed a way forward to a history of Athenian "image-making" and iconography that leaves the attribution of a pot a marginal issue, if not entirely irrelevant.

Yet Beazley deserves better than this rather barren dispute. It is not enough to claim him right or wrong. More to the point is to understand how and why his approach carried the day. That is the universal conviction that it did and what has had on ancient art history as a whole.

One of the main effects of Beazley's enormous work was to provide a Renaissance modal history of Athenian vase painting. For only did he create a gallery of artists, he "followers", "pupils", "schools"; he "influence" between one painter and another, he talked of vases "in the manner" of certain painters. This language is revealing. It had more than a little to do with the great masters of the Florentine Quattrocento; it converted vase painting into high-status art history. This valid view of the subject, this implicit assurance to his followers that they were playing aesthetic games of style with the best, certainly did much to ensure the acceptance of Beazley's approach. It also did much to change the character of the market in Athenian pots. The attribution of these objects came to depend on the artist's quality. No one would suggest that Beazley's position like that of other great art historians — Bernard Berenson — who became a purchasing agent for Mrs. Duffell and later Duveen, but others profited

from Beazley's work; for he provided that most saleable of commodities — artists' names.

The plausibility of Beazley's attributions rests also with the plausibility of the Morellian method as a whole. It is by no means self-evident that the essential individuality of a painting (or of anything else for that matter) is best revealed in its thoughtless, apparently trivial details. To attempt to deduce the inner truth from superficially insignificant clues is a distinctively late-nineteenth-century method of scientific inquiry. Freud, Morelli and Sherlock Holmes (as Carlo Ginzburg has shown) all had this in common: Holmes repeatedly astounded Watson by building up a full picture of his wanted man from (for example) a discarded hat or a cigar-butt; Morelli would claim a "new" Botticelli on the basis of an ear-lobe or hand, previously ignored; for Freud it was our inadvertent words and gestures that best provided access to the inner self and the unconscious. Freud had indeed read Morelli's work some time before developing his theory of psychoanalysis and perhaps it is not too fanciful to imagine that he was influenced by it. In retrospect, though, the primacy is reversed. The widespread popular acceptance of, at the very least, the "Freudian slip" may well help to explain why the Morellian method can still seem plausible. Uncomfortable as they may find the suggestion, the Classical art historians' acceptance of Beazley's Morellizing no doubt derives in part from their post-Freudian world-view.

It is a pity that *Beazley and Oxford*, edited by Donna Kurtz, hardly touches on these important issues. It comprises four lectures delivered last year in Oxford to commemorate the centenary of Beazley's birth, together with a reprint of his British Academy obituary (of 1970). The quality of the contributions is mixed. Martin Robertson presents a delicate and neatly crafted piece, which alone tries to come to terms with some of the powerful recent criticisms of Beazley's method and assumptions. Dale Trendall offers a dry, but no doubt useful, survey of Beazley's (admittedly sparse) contributions on the subject of the painted pottery of South Italy. For the rest, the volume is both cosy and eulogistic — excusable faults perhaps in an obituary, but unattractive in the presentations of the history of Classical Archaeology in Oxford and of Beazley's influence as a teacher.

The narrowness of some of these contributions causes a wry smile. Almost comically academic is the praise of Beazley's war record: "Far from going into hibernation during the long dark years of the war, he patiently went through all the volumes of the *Annali* and the *Bollettino dell'Istituto*"! Nor is it easy to identify with a world-view that can lament the "isolation" of California — compared, we must assume, with Oxford. Indeed, one is drawn here to follow the usual cliché of reviewers and to regret the absence of a map. This time it is a map of Oxford that is missing — without which the outsider can make little sense of the various recorded perambulations around the Ashmolean, the Klog's Arms, 100 Holywell St and Wadham College.

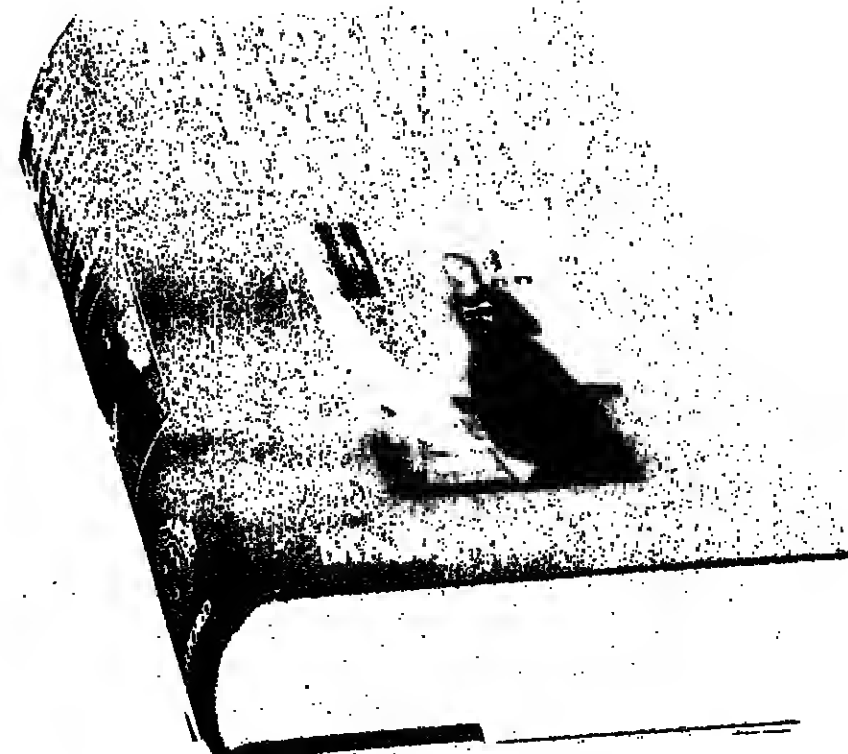
More seriously alarming is the intellectual narrowness of vision. This goes beyond what is (except in the case of Robertson) an unreflective adherence to the Beazley method. It seems peculiarly unworthy of a collection dedicated to the memory of Beazley (who was, if nothing else, radically innovative) that the present holder of Beazley's chair, John Boardman, can state: "I am not particularly sorry that Oxford is making no very determined or committed contribution to what is called the New Archaeology in the classical sphere. New Archaeology, like *nouvelle cuisine*, is seductive in appearance but nutritionally unsatisfying, and we may do well to be, in the Beazley manner, fastidious in our selection of lost causes, and refuse to be dominated by a school or dogma. In Oxford, research subjects are still chosen by the students, not dictated by the professors." The refusal of dogma is, of course, itself dogma — and pretty barren dogma at that.

It might be objected that these strictures are unfair. After all, any group should be able to meet and celebrate its intellectual hero in any way it chooses. That is true; but when that celebration is published and offered for sale to an unsuspecting world, a reviewer has the right to reply.

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TLS April 26 1985



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The archaeologist as hero

Stuart Piggott

The British archaeologist, and his mentor, the antiquary, have had the misfortune, over more than three centuries, to be figures who caught the public eye, unlike their close counterparts such as the historian or the geologist. From at least the beginning of the seventeenth century The Antiquary was a figure of fun; in 1628 John Earle, in his *Microcosmographie*, included "An Antiquary" among his Theophrastian characters, and his portrait is wholly one of gentle ridicule, contrasting for instance with the "Downe-right Scholler" and "Plodding Student" who for all his amusing satire are depicted with approval and commendation. By 1690 "Antiquary" is given a comic entry in *A New Dictionary . . . of the Canine Crew* and thenceforward ridiculous antiquaries abound in the eighteenth century, virtuosi ridiculed by the wits such as Addison, Pope and Arbuthnot; on stage from John Glyn's *Three Hours After Marriage* in 1717 to Samuel Foote's *The Nabob* of 1773, and culminating in Scott's *The Antiquary* of 1816. The serious antiquaries, from John Aubrey through William Stukeley, John Huxley or James Douglas, had to contend with the popular stereotype of the futile old doddler, and it is significant that when in 1812 Sir Richard Colt Hoare published his and William Cunningham's famous barrow excavations he saw himself not as an antiquary but as writing a history of Wiltshire in two parts, prehistoric and Roman ("Ancient Wilt") and medieval and beyond ("Modern Wilt").

But by the 1840s a new type of student was emerging, with a new name. "Archaeologist" had been intermittently current since the 1820s, but was now to come into use for a new character, and one in opposition to the traditional antiquary. The Society of Antiquaries of London had been founded in 1717 (the year of Guy's farce) and was by now in decay, with the "doleful dullness of our meetings" deplored even by some of its own members. A lively and amusing critic from Jamaica, Sir Fortunatus Dwaris, criticizing the Society as a Fellow in 1852, hoped that with reform "archaeologists [sic] and antiquaries will take sweet counsel together". He thus recognized the division that had already expressed itself by the secession in 1843 of the British Archaeological Association, whose title indicated its alliance with the archaeologists and not the antiquaries, as did those of the numerous county Archaeological Societies founded in the 1840s. In *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (1851) that brilliant and forthright scholar Daniel Wilson made no bones about it. "It was not till continental Archaeologists had shown what legitimate induction is capable of that those of Britain were content to forsake laborious trifling". It was "the fault of the antiquary" and "his misfortune that his most recondite pursuits are peculiarly exposed to the laborious idlings of the mere dabbler in science, so that they alternatively assume to the uninterested observer the aspect of frivolous pastime and solemn trifling". Archaeology must take "a place among the sister sciences", having "close relations" with "the researches of the ethnologist".

This was fighting talk: Wilson had himself invented the word "prehistoric" and the European archaeologists were of course the Danes, C. J. Thomsen and J. J. A. Worsaae, whose technological divisions of prehistory into stone, bronze and iron ages had been demonstrated in English translations in 1848 and 1849. Within a decade or so Wilson's alliance with the ethnologists was being reinforced, as doctors of medicine and anatomists turned to the skulls found by the barrow-openers, and Drs Davis and Thurham published *Crania Britannica* in 1856-65, and the Professor of Anatomy at Oxford, George Rolleston, his study of Canon Greenwell's prehistoric skulls in 1877. A new Archaeology was well established to join the geologists and Darwinians in the establishment of the high antiquity of man in the eventual years of 1859-60. "A new Science has, so to say, been born among us . . . Archaeology forms, in fact, the link between geology and history". Sir John Lubbock was to say in 1865. Antiquaries remained, but some thought that their Society perpetuated not only a name but an attitude of "laborious trifling" by now out of date.

British archaeology was becoming professional, but the educated public in general were not very interested. At the antings of the archaeological societies a barrow might be "opened" to add pots and trinkets to the buttermilk and stuffed birds in the local museum; a doctor would perhaps talk of lang and round skulls. Gael and Brythons; a parson of flints rather than wild flowers. On the whole the Church of England was untroubled by Evans or Lubbock, and Darwin was after all not an archaeologist. If excavations were to stir the imagination, and they did, they appealed not to any spirit of science, but to piety, poetry and aesthetics. The great pioneer excavations of the nineteenth century in the Near East and the Aegean were in the first place validations of sacred texts, the Bible and Homer. Early Egyptian civilization, redolent of Moses and the Exodus, became known through books like Sir Gardner Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (1841); Assyria and Babylon by Layard's run-away best seller, *Nineveh and its Remains* (1849). As the Victorian reverence for the Greeks replaced the eighteenth-century admiration of Rome, Homer came to rank near to Holy Writ (indeed one sometimes wonders whether in Gladstone's mind the two were always distinct) and in the 1870s Schliemann, first at Troy and then Mycenae, triumphantly vindicated the classics. Classical archaeology emerged with an aura and mystique, primarily as the aesthetic study of works of art (not their recovery in the field, from Lord Elgin onwards), retaining even to-day its Victorian respectability in alone speaking not of decorated pots but of painted vases—with what delightful overtones of a faded North Oxford gentility, vanished.

Since Jack was only a Junior Proctor And rents were lower in Rawlinson Road. By the last decades of the nineteenth-century archaeology was being professionalized as a branch of science—in the wide sense of an intellectual discipline within neither the literary or the aesthetic traditions. This did not of course mean paid employment in a subject tending neither to making money (as geology could) nor to come within the ambit of polite learning. Its exponents were busy men in other professions, devoting their leisure and finances to an intellectual ideal. Despite the popularity of books such as Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times* from 1865 onwards, the new British archaeology could only be of marginal interest to most: extracting chipped flints from a gravel pit, or the coloured plans and rigorous schedules of potsherds of Pitt Rivers, could hardly strike a chord of high romance. But by the 1880s this was to change, and the public found (and were encouraged by him to find) an archaeological Hero Figure in the Excavator Abroad, a part consummately played by William Flinders Petrie.

Surviving vessels

Michael Crawford

D.P.S. PEACOCK and D. F. WILLIAMS
Amphorae and the Roman Economy
239pp. Longman. £28.
0582 493048

The study of amphorae, the standard large containers for the transport of liquids, has in recent years provided the largest body of new evidence for the economic history of the ancient world. This is in part the result of the increasing intensity with which ancient wrecks are being explored; for these normally provide sealed deposits consisting of a single cargo, though there are cases where later reflection suggests that the excavators have failed to realize they were dealing with one wreck on top of another. Of the two authors here, D.P.S. Peacock has handled many amphorae and written some distinguished articles on their distribution; D. F. Williams has analysed a number of amphorae and contributed to ascertaining their origin. The subject is in general not an easy one, since the provenance of Roman amphorae is much harder to establish than that of most Greek amphorae. And their distribution in itself rarely reveals much of the underlying economic processes, such as the diffusion of

This extraordinary character has recently been the subject of a full biography by Margaret Drower (reviewed in the TLS on September 20, 1985) and we can see how enthusiasm turned to passion, passion to near-mania, over eight years of compulsive excavating in Egypt, and how the general public (from whom Petrie sought funds in default of academic or scientific backing) took to his heart and helped create the lone explorer, treasure hunter, stereotype of the archaeologist that still persists today. I'm afraid Indiana Jones has Petrie among his ancestors. A century ago there was the romance of Egypt, the prestige of the Bible, its appeal strengthened by the results of Mesopotamian digging, the solitary fanatic making spectacular finds in the desert—here was something for everyone. Above all, people were not only excited, but something easy to understand, without any disagreeable application of intellectual discipline. By the beginning of the present century, however, a younger generation was taking over in this country, which looked back to Pitt Rivers, not Petrie, as an exemplar, and tried to formulate a discipline and dispel a myth.

I have dwelt on the past because it explains the present, and its attitudes are many of them still current. The modern archaeology of the 1930s, in which I was brought up and which I tried to help form, was still largely dependent on amateurs working to professional standards of excellence which made increasing alliances with scientific disciplines. O. G. S. Crawford and Cyril Fox in the 1920s brought a geographical dimension to archaeology, soon augmented by Grahame Clark as archaeologist and Harry Goodwin as botanist, with a Cambridge team which laid the foundations of environmental archaeology long before the buzzword took over. Crawford made a bold venture to interest the public in all this new work by launching, with immediate success, the journal *Antiquity* in 1927. His acute perception of a potential public was justified by the response of well over 1,200 subscribers for the first number, almost wholly non-archaeologists, for we were then very few on the ground. This educated middle-class public, enjoying solid untrivialized articles by Gordon Childe on the Danubian neolithic, R. G. Collingwood on the philosophy of history or E. C. Curwen on British prehistoric agriculture (all in the first volume) is one scarcely to be found today, when the readership of the still flourishing journal is predominantly professional—an episode of our social and intellectual history has closed. It was for such a public that Childe later produced his famous works of popularization—*Man Makes Himself* (1936), *What Happened in History* (1941) and the rest, part archaeology, part idiosyncratic sociology. From the 1920s, with Petrie still fiddling

away, an increasing menace, British archaeology was invigorated, and a huge public attracted, by a new Hero Excavator, Mortimer Wheeler. His real and lasting contribution to archaeology was to go back to Pitt Rivers, neglected and thought to embody an unattainable patrician ideal, and forcibly to show that his principles were as applicable in tenager's feet as on the broad acres of Cranborne Chase. This technical revolution in the 1920s was disguised to the public by the flamboyance and panache of his showmanship which, exploiting the new media of radio and television, made him everyman's embodiment of the romantic archaeologist near at home. Later he was to demonstrate the same skilled disciplines in India, while in the Near East a new generation such as Henri Frinkfort, Seton Lloyd and Leonard Woolley had quietly altered the course of excavation and its techniques towards problems rather than treasure. Work indeed found the first hint of the famous Royal Tombs at Ur in the course of routine work in 1922 but, a notable tribute to new standards of scientific responsibility, waited four years before developing his skills and comprehension, before excavating them.

At home, the over-riding needs of "mass archaeology" in advance of commercial and governmental exploitation temporarily provided the public with a new picture of the excavator—young, tough and muddy, with academic and unconcerned with theoretical niceties, a comforting stereotype in an intellectual world where the maelstrom was adding a proletarian dimension to the racket of the antiquities trade. Professional archaeology (like geology, palaeontology or palaeobotany) was however becoming increasingly difficult to understand by a big public to whom the past was now thought of as a leisure pursuit, a sentimental stroll down heritage lane. They did not want, in Howard's words, to "find themselves unexpectedly committed to a business which demands not only the possession, but the constant exercise of intellectual facilities", which is why archaeology has become today, increasingly a matter of co-operation between a dozen disciplines, archaeological research, like that in component sciences, has become a directed team-work devoted to problem solving, fulfilling the hopes of Daniel Wilson at Pitt Rivers long ago.

But, a pessimist in most things, I have not hope for a new and more satisfactory public understanding of archaeology when I think of those devoted, mostly, thank heavens, young voluntary workers on the rigorously planned and controlled research excavations in Britain. Uncovering a dung-beetle in 5087, and a peat is hardly romantic, but understanding the evidence, a tiny part in a larger pattern, brings its own reward.

gentile structure they propound makes one wonder if the authors know any Roman history at all; for they suppose that if someone called Pomponius became a consul, no other Roman could have been a humble trader.

The second part of the book consists of a useful gazetteer of kiln sites and a list of amphora forms, with drawings, photographs, technical descriptions, and an account of origin, date, diffusion and contents for each. The only way to learn how to recognize amphora fragments is to handle a lot of complete ones; in so far as this list encourages people to suppose otherwise, it is likely to be counter-productive. But the list is an opportunity missed. The study of Roman amphorae will not now progress, unless we start talking, not of Dressel 1A, but of "Central Italian Republic (Dressel 1A)" or of "Central Italian Republic to Early Empire (Dressel 1)" and so on. Traditional nomenclature, necessary at an early stage, has become an obstacle, not least to linking research into Roman with that into Greek amphorae.

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The fall of the House of Usher

Glyn Daniel

PHILIPPA LEVINE
The Amateur and the Professional:
Antiquarians, historians and archaeologists in
Victorian England 1838-1886
210pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0521 306353

This book is mainly chronicle and will be a valuable work of reference when we want to know, for example, when the Public Record Office was set up or the Historical Manuscripts Commission founded, or about the growth of local archaeological societies, and the development of historical studies in British universities. Philippa Levine's overall subject is the gradual growth of professionalism in Victorian historical and archaeological studies, not a new topic although well documented here. It is unhelpful to say that the Disney Professors of Archaeology at Cambridge in Victorian times were all amateurs: how could it be otherwise? Outside our big museums there were no professional archaeologists then available, and people like Birch or Franks were not going to leave the British Museum for a part-time chair of limited tenure and nominal emoluments.

Dr Levine tends to cut down her characters: among archaeologists Sir John Lubbock, John Evans, A. W. Franks, Arthur Evans, Petrie and Pitt Rivers do not stand out as the giants they were; among historians Thomas Carlyle and Lord Macaulay, authors of great and influential historical works, are dismissed as *belles-lettres* and not discussed because "neither was ever part of the wider historical community but found their associates and friends rather in literary and political circles of a more general kind".

She underestimates the implications of what happened to Victorian thought in that *annus mirabilis* 1859, when in May and June Prestwich and John Evans read their papers to the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries on the antiquity of stone implements and in November Darwin published the *Origin of Species*. She says that, "Discoveries in the South of England and France suggested the need to extend backwards ideas about the age of the earth." But it was the age of man that had to be rethought by the discoveries at Torquay, Brighthelm and Avebury.

1859 sounded the death-knell to the comfortable short chronology of man which had been standard belief since Tudor and Stuart times. Archbishop Usher and Dr John Lightfoot, re-working the chronology of Eusebius and Jerome, declared that man had been created on October 23 or 28, 4004 A.C. Shakespeare in *As You Like It* (1600) puts into Rosalind's mouth the words, "The poor World is almost six thousand years old", and the date 4004 was printed in the margin of the Authorized Version of the Bible (1611). These views were widely held until mid-Victorian times. The striking and much-quoted phrase "a rose-red city, half as old as time" was not a flight of poetic fancy: to Burgon and to many early Victorians time was six thousand years old, and he literally meant Petra to be half that age.

John Frere, a country gentleman of East Anglia, sent, in 1797, to the Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of London a parcel of flint implements he had found at Hoxne which he properly described as "weapons of war, fabricated and used by a people who had not the use of metals". He noted they had been found in undisturbed gravel twelve feet below the surface of the ground and said, perceptively, "The situation in which these weapons were found may tempt us to refer them to a very remote period indeed, even beyond that of the present world"—i.e. the six-thousand-year past of man. Hardly anyone paid attention to his discovery, published in *Archaeologia* for 1800.

Sixty years later Prestwich and John Evans were able to describe the discoveries of Penryn, in Devon and Boucher de Perthes at Avebury, Evans, in his paper to the Society of Antiquaries on June 2, 1859, said, "This much appears to be established beyond doubt, that in a period of antiquity remote beyond any of which we have hitherto found traces, the portion of the globe was peopled by man." Prehistory was born.

The excitement which this new dimension of the past aroused in Victorian historians, anti-

quarians and archaeologists is not adequately conveyed in Levine's survey. Very gradually the fundamentalist chronology was replaced by a belief in the remote past of man. But it took a long time for history and archaeology to become properly accredited university subjects. The History Trips did not get going in Cambridge until 1873. The Archaeology and Anthropology Tripos, as it is now called, was on the Statute Book in 1915 but no class list was published until 1921. The Disney Chair of Archaeology was established there in 1852: it was not, as Levine states "a chair of classical antiquities" but of general archaeology. In the early 1880s there were rumours and discussions about the establishment of a Professorship of Archaeology in Oxford. Sir Arthur Evans was being advised to stand until he learnt that it was to be confined to classical archaeology. In a letter to Freeman in 1883 he said, "to confine a Professorship of Archaeology to classical times seems to me as reasonable as to create a chair of 'Insular Geography' or 'Mesozoic Geology'." But it was founded in 1884 as a Chair of Classical Archaeology and there was no Chair of Prehistoric Archaeology until 1946.

Levine has little to say about the confusion in which the Victorians found themselves following the discrediting of the Biblical chronology. They knew that man was older than 4004 A.C. but the question was, how much older? Sir Thomas Browne in his *Religio Medici* (1643) said, "Time we may comprehend. 'Tis but five days older than ourselves, and hath the same horizon with the world." It has been our fortune to be given exact chronologies by the natural scientists, so that we can date the beginnings of human culture in East Africa to three million years ago, and the megalithic monuments of Europe to the fifth millennium A.C.—earlier than the pyramids of Egypt and the ziggurats of Mesopotamia. But it would be a rash man who said that as a result of radiocarbon dating techniques we comprehend time, any more than did the prehistoric archaeologists of Victorian days—amateur or professional.

This is in many ways an unsatisfactory and rather dull book. It began as a PhD thesis, and although Levine acknowledges the help she had to "restructure a rather shambly doctoral thesis" it shows little sign of that rewriting and

revision which would make it more palatable to the general reader. The opportunity should have been taken of extending the thesis to include Wales and Scotland: there is no mention, for instance, of (Sir) Daniel Wilson, who published his *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* in 1851. In his preface to the second edition, published twelve years later, he refers to "the application of the term prehistoric, introduced—if I mistake not—for the first time in this work." He was not mistaken. Lubbock (later Lord Avebury, but never, as his critics scornfully prophesied, Viscount Stonehenge), whom Levine refers to as "an anthropologist", was the polymath and archaeologist who popularized the idea of prehistory. His *Prehistoric Times*, first published in 1865, went into a seventh edition in 1913: it was widely read and it introduced into the English language the terms Palaeolithic and Neolithic, which he had coined. The notion of prehistory was one of the great revolutions in historical thinking in Victorian times. Dr Levine could well have devoted a chapter to Prehistory and Victorian History.

She has read widely and her book is full of quotations from hooks, immigral lectures and letters—letters to and from Stubbs, Freeman, Froude, J. R. Green, Kingsley, Seeley, Maitland and others. She disappoints by not quoting the famous passage in Stubbs's letter to J. R. Green of December 17, 1871:

Froude informs the Scottish youth That persons do not care for truth The Reverend Canon Kingsley cries History is a pack of lies. What cause for judgments so malign? A brief reflection solves the mystery— Froude believes Kingsley a divine, And Kingsley goes to Froude for history.

Not that she is without a sense of humour; we should all be grateful to her for rescuing for us from the relative obscurity of the 1949 *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History* Leslie Dow's four-fold classification of archaeologists who attended meetings and social functions into: (1) The Archaeologist proper, (2) The Harkaeologist, who comes to listen, (3) The Larkaeologist, who comes for the fun of things, (4) The Sharkaeologist, who comes for the luncheon.

A Mesopotamian connection

Dervla Murphy

THOR HEYERDAHL
The Maldive Mystery
322pp. Allen and Unwin. £12.95.
0049101048

In 1879 a British Commissioner of the Ceylon Civil Service, H.C.P. Bell, was shipwrecked on the Maldive Islands and discovered mounds which he identified as the remains of Buddhist stupas. Subsequently he returned twice to the islands, "for the purpose of investigating the pre-existence of Buddhism in the Group", but was thwarted by the Maldivians' reluctance to acknowledge their ancestors' pre-Islamic culture. Since A.D. 1153, when the Islamic faith was adopted by (or imposed on) the islanders, no non-Muslim had been allowed to settle on the 600-mile long Indian Ocean archipelago. Thor Heyerdahl comments that "when it came to religion the Maldivians were obstinate and uncompromising". The "mystery" in his title refers to the archipelago's ancient culture or cultures, which have not been studied since Mr Bell's abortive probes through the jungle.

For eight centuries the Maldivians lived uneventfully and apparently contentedly under autocratic Muslim Sultans, but in 1968 things changed abruptly when a democratically elected President formed the Maldivian Republic. The 1,200 (or so) islands, with a population of 160,000, became one of the smallest states in the United Nations. Only 202 islands, none of which rise more than six feet above sea-level, are now inhabited, though ruins prove that long ago many others were quite densely populated.

The new Republic was soon encouraging tourists to visit a few of the larger islands; but all foreigners have to leave the capital island (Male) by 10 pm and it is illegal to import into the Republic alcohol, dogs or photographs of

nudes. As part of the Maldivians' modernization programme, the President, His Excellency Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, asked Thor Heyerdahl in 1982 to organize an archaeological exploration of the archipelago's past.

From where did the original Maldivians come, and when? Why do they have their own unique script—related to Sanskrit and several Southern Indian languages—which reveals that they have inherited an ancient civilization? With whom did they trade in ages past? The Heyerdahl expedition found many stimulating clues, including coins, statues and carved stones—some of outstanding sophistication and beauty—that set up a chain reaction in the Heyerdahl mind, suggesting links with Mesopotamia, Mohenjodaro, China, Egypt and even Peru.

So little has been written about the Maldives that this book is well worth reading, and the author's excitement on being challenged by the Maldivian mystery is unmistakably genuine—and therefore infectious. Yet many readers will regret the extent to which he has allowed himself to become commarced. As he frankly explains, "I always finance my expeditions with books and films. This time the Swedish state television were covering the costs in advance against TV world rights. . . . Never before had I travelled surrounded by so many cameramen."

As a record of an archaeological expedition *The Maldive Mystery* is both fascinating and frustrating. Many of Heyerdahl's deductions are plausible, but too many pages are littered with such phrases as "they might well have. . .", "these suggested that. . .". What are the non-specialists for whom Thor Heyerdahl writes to make of these speculations? Much of the Maldivian mystery seems too mysterious to be elucidated so briskly and glibly. This would surely have been a better book had the author given himself more time to study the results of his expedition's findings.

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Volume Three, Part One, of the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (357pp. Mansell. £120. 07201 1779 8) opens the work's coverage of the eighteenth century, with a survey of twenty-two authors, from Addison to Fielding alphabetically. Some, such as Burke, Boswell and Cowper, have already been made the subjects of major editions, much of the listing of manuscripts in which is repeated here. Beckford, now principally in the Bodleian Library, remains to be explored thoroughly but is usefully summarized; Blake, much studied elsewhere, is treated summarily with reference to the other literature; but Burns takes up no less than a hundred pages. The volume is the work of Margaret M. Smith.

The April 1986 issue of the *Yale University Library Gazette* (\$14 per issue. ISSN 0044 0175) is an unusually rich and varied number. It includes articles on Boccaccio, English broadsides, David Brainerd and on the Ballard collection of Russian bookplates. Owen Chadwick's bicentennial address "The Religion of Samuel Johnson" is included, as is Donald Gallup's frank and detailed account of some of the legal and archival complications attached to the Ezra Pound archive at Yale.